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Hibbert Lectures

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CIVILISATION AND  
RELIGIOUS VALUES

by

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## Introduction

THE HIBBERT LECTURESHIP was founded in 1878 to encourage the unfettered, scientific, sympathetic and reverent study of religion in its historical, comparative and philosophic aspects with the object of directing the attention of the British educated classes to the results of these studies and their significance for the reorganisation of religious thought and life.

The Lectures delivered on the Hibbert Foundation fall roughly into two classes, the most original consisting of monographs on the non-Christian religions scientifically studied in the light of their origin and growth. The opening Hibbert Lectures, *Religions of India*, by Max Müller, come in this class, followed by *Buddhism*, by T. W. Rhys Davids, *Ancient Religions of Mexico and Peru*, by Albert Réville, *Religion of the Ancient Hebrews*, by C. G. Montefiore, *Celtic Heathendom*, by J. Rhys, etc., etc.

The other class consists of a series of studies in the Christian Religion. The most brilliant of these are *Influence of Greek Ideas and Usage upon the Christian Church*, by Edwin Hatch, *Reformation of the Sixteenth Century in its Relation to Modern Thought and Knowledge*, by Charles Beard, *Influence of the Institutions, Thought and Culture of Rome on Christianity and the Development of the Catholic Church*, by Ernest Renan, and *Christianity in its Simplest and Most Intelligible Form*, by that Christian saint, Principal James Drummond.

In both of these classes the contributions made by the more distinguished of the Hibbert Lecturers have



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become classics for English students of religion. There is an insight and finality about the contributions from Max Müller, Hatch, Beard, which render it extremely unlikely that they will become obsolete.

Of course, the majority of the lectures in the series cannot claim to come in this distinguished category. Their justification is that they had a real interest and value at the time of their delivery. My justification for accepting the invitation with which the Hibbert Trustees have honoured me arises from my conviction that there is at the present time urgent need for the right understanding of the relations of religion to civilisation.

The four lectures which comprise this volume were delivered in the Universities of Cambridge, Manchester and Bristol, in the autumn of 1946.

I wish to express my thanks to Dr. J. C. Flower (Secretary to the Hibbert Trustees) for his suggestions and corrections.

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*The fact of the religious vision, and its history of persistent expansion, is our one ground for optimism.*

A. N. WHITEHEAD

*The religious is . . . the architectonic idea of society, the commanding idea of conduct . . . and he who can create its most perfect form is our supreme benefactor—the foremost person in all our history.*

PRINCIPAL FAIRBAIRN

*It needs no prophet to foresee that the time will come when ideas, which today are strange and unwelcome, will be seen to possess a beauty of their own, to be necessary to the completeness of truth, and to belong, no less than many which are long familiar, to the common treasury of the Kingdom of God.*

H. B. SWETE

*When the religion of a civilisation dies, the death of the civilisation speedily follows.*

GOETHE

# Lecture One

## CIVILISATION AND RELIGION

*Physical science is no more atheistic than it is materialistic.*

T. H. HUXLEY

*To the most highly educated moral philosopher, religion is still necessary in the region of intelligence : while in the region of the will it is as necessary to him as to the savage.*

PROFESSOR PERCY GARDNER

*How long can Western man endure life that is not fundamentally religious ? I am hopeful because I believe the answer is not much longer . . . You deplore the average Englishman's loss of his vigorous integrity, but I do not see how a man can have a vigorous integrity without a religious faith.*

Letters of MAX PLOWMAN

*We have got to get back to God. Unless the world gets back to God it hasn't a chance. We ought to hurry back to God.*

J. A. SPENDER



# CIVILISATION AND RELIGION

## I. CIVILISATION

THE THEME of these lectures is the Relevance of Religion for Civilisation. You may suspect that my course of lectures will be an academic and post-war version of the theme: *If Christ came to Chicago*. If Chicago came to Christ would be nearer the mark.

What is civilisation? It is the opposite of barbarism. The civilised man was the *civis* or citizen of his city. The barbarian was the outsider, the foreigner "with customs odious, manners none," who spoke an incomprehensible language, Bar Bar.

For the Greek and Roman, his own city or municipality constituted the ideal sphere of life. Its inhabitant, for the Greek, was the polite man: for the Roman, the urbane man: theirs was the spirit of Dr. Johnson: "Sir, when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life."

A man without his own city was lost indeed.

"Tell me, stranger, on what far shore  
Hast thou a city? Is there a door  
Knoweth thy footsteps, wandering one?"

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Their city was the home of their gods as of their fellow-citizens and its manner of life, its civilisation, was what they valued most.

With the primitive Hebrews it was otherwise: for them the ideal sphere of life was pastoral. It was on the rolling hills and open plains that virtue and religion were to be found and not among—to use their phrase—“the unclean dwellers of the town.” When Cain became an agriculturist, he murdered his pastoral and God-fearing brother, Abel, and fled the country-side. It was his descendants who built the first city and developed the mechanical arts, including the working of metals and the manufacture of arms. When they dared to invade the Divine domain by building the Tower of Babel, Yahweh checked the advances of their civilisation by confounding their language and scattering them abroad over the face of the earth.

For the primitive worshippers of Yahweh, civilisation and religion were in opposing camps. At a later stage in their history, when Solomon, overriding the opposition of the prophets, built the Temple in Jerusalem, religion and civilisation were for a time united. But the prophets, deep down, always regarded Jerusalem as the source of religious and moral corruption. The prophet Micah predicted the destruction of the Temple; so also did Jeremiah; so also did Jesus Christ; “O pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee” was the exhortation of the devout Psalmist; but, in many pious breasts there lurked the apprehension that Jerusalem was past praying for. After the destruction of Jerusalem, first Babylon, and then Rome, became

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the symbol of the great enemy of true religion and not until Rome's fall—"Babylon the Great, the mother of abominations, is fallen"—was there security for the triumph of the Christian Faith. (cf. *Rev.* xiv, 8 ; xviii, 2.) Yet, such is the irony of history, at a later period pagan Rome, now replaced by papal Rome, but still the wickedest city in the world, became the religious capital of western civilisation.

When in the sixteenth century civilisation and religion were again divided, London and afterwards New York replaced the Italian Babylon, and religion in the popular mind was once more relegated to the simplicities of rural isolation as expressed in the proverb: "God made the country, man made the town."

It would seem from this very brief sketch that for the religious mind religion and civilisation are unequally yoked together and that the contact of religion with civilisation only serves to corrupt religion and merely adds to the guilt of civilisation.

"Come out from among them and touch not the unclean thing and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith God Almighty."

(ii *Cor.* vi ; 17, 18, cf. *Isaiah* lii ; 11)

Yet, I cannot but hold that this is a very superficial view of the true relations of religion and civilisation. A sound solution of this problem of the relations of religion to civilisation depends upon our constantly holding fast to two things which we are always liable to forget.

1. The first is that civilisation is very young and that although religion is much older, yet religion is also very young and both have much to learn. The



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best kinds, both of civilisation and religion, recognise this. According to our scientists, it is some 1,200 million years since organic life originated on this planet. Fifty years ago the physicists demanded 50 million years for the age of the earth and contended with the biologists who demanded at least 100 million years. It would seem that the biologists have won triumphantly. But man, according to our scientists, has only come into existence during the last half million years; and civilisation has only come into existence during the last 10,000 years.

What period may we suppose lies ahead of the human race on this planet? We cannot say. We cannot even imagine. Perhaps a million years?

The learned bishop, John Wordsworth, in the nineteenth century, in his *Ministry of Grace*, warned his readers against the mistake of supposing that the Christian Religion was near the end of its terrestrial history, and opined that consciousness of the sunset touch was really a check to true Christian faith and sound Christian policy. He suggested that perhaps the Christian Church, which had not existed 2,000 years, had at least 20,000 years ahead of it. What would Hermas who wrote the *Shepherd* in the second century A.D. and therein depicted the Christian Church as a very old woman have thought of such episcopal speculation?

The right understanding and sound solution of the problems of religion and civilisation and their true relation demand long-sighted vision. The notion that the Owl of Minerva only begins to wing her flight when the shades of night are falling is the delusion of philosophers, each of whom regards his own system

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of philosophy as the final word in the interpretation of the Universe.

2. The second point we are apt to forget is the true nature of civilisation. We are apt to conceive of it as predominantly materialistic. Today a favourite way of interpreting civilisation is in terms of Marxian materialism. If you understand the economic forces, their origin, history, methods of operation, you understand civilisation. It is these economic forces that control and inspire both the direction and achievements of civilisation. Civilisation must be interpreted *economically*. Every other interpretation is what the German professor described as "vishvosh."

Or again, we interpret civilisation *mechanistically*. Civilisation originated when man became a tool-using animal; in what anthropologists name the Palæolithic and Neolithic periods, before the metallic ages of bronze and iron. As man's power to construct machines developed, he brought nature more and more under his control and natural forces became his servants and natural resources his treasures from which he secured an increasing wealth to satisfy his present needs and to provide for those of the future. The History of Civilisation is thus pre-eminently the history of the development and perfecting of machinery of every kind. Without machines man is a barbarian; as the master of machines he is a civilised man: hence, it is not uncommon in popular conversation for civilisation to be identified with acceleration. The author of *Erewhon* fantastically developed the fiction of machinery conspiring to subjugate man and suffering final defeat only after the

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most tremendous struggle, which ended in the rigid exclusion of machinery from the civilisation of the Erewhonians as needful for their freedom and happiness.

This of course is absurd; although attempts to replace machine-woven cloth in India by hand-weaving, among the followers of Mr. Gandhi, like the Luddite riots in our own country a century ago, suggest that there are Erewhonians in our modern civilisation.

Another inadequate way of interpreting civilisation is in terms of science. Scientific discovery constitutes a remarkable feature and factor in our modern civilisation. That man has been able to discover his place in this vast universe of space and time; that he has been able to discover the chemical elements of which the universe is composed even in the case of the most distant stars; that he has been able to measure the forces and methods by which the celestial mechanism is operated; that he has been able to discover the amazing history of his own evolution starting from an organism akin to the protozoa and culminating in the development of a rational, moral, æsthetic and spiritual personality, is a superb tribute to the quality of the Nature of Man. The enlightenment and breadth of understanding and outlook secured for mankind by scientific discovery is incredibly marvellous and if civilisation is to be expressed in terms of one aspect only, then scientific discovery or the progress of science deserves the highest place.

But a right understanding of civilisation, like a sound education, ought to avoid the tyranny and restrictions of departmentalism and should be as all-

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round as possible—everything of something and something of everything.

The economic, the mechanistic, the scientific are all true aspects of civilisation and ought to be combined in our understanding of it. But here I come to the most serious defect of our departmentalism in our understanding of civilisation.

The economic, mechanistic, scientific aspects of civilisation may be called objective. I do not like the term objective but I mean by it those aspects of civilisation which are obvious when we compare a modern civilised community with a savage or barbaric community. Yet, a very important feature or factor of civilisation has been omitted. It is one which is not obvious: it constitutes the unseen foundations of society.

There are moral and spiritual foundations of civilisation which, because not obvious, are ignored by the vast majority who take only a superficial view of civilisation. These moral and spiritual foundations of civilisation "are not made," as one has said, "but grow". Perhaps the situation would be best expressed by saying they are developed, and developed in and through human personality. It has been said that it is in the soul of man that things happen, and in a sense—some will say a Platonic sense—that civilisation exists in the region of ideas before it comes into existence in the form of realised facts. Certainly no civilisation would be long worth possessing if it did not itself possess these moral and spiritual foundations which, so far as this world is concerned, have their rational, moral and spiritual existence in human personality itself. It is in this connection therefore

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that we ought to include in an all-round estimate of civilisation its educational systems. For it is by means of these educational systems that the moral and spiritual foundations of civilisation are developed and sustained. Without this extremely important feature and factor, a civilisation will have no sure foundation and may quite unexpectedly and disastrously collapse into barbarism.

All-round education—an education, not merely economic, mechanistic and scientific but moral, spiritual and æsthetic, is an absolutely needful factor in a modern civilisation.

Dean R. W. Church, who, like Bishop Joseph Butler, declined the Archbishopric of Canterbury, sums this up in the following passage from his attractive, if somewhat old-fashioned book, *The Gifts of Civilisation* :

“It is this rise and growth of moral standard and effort, this aim and attempt at higher things in life, and not merely in the instruments and appliances of life, which enters as the essential element into the true notion of civilisation, and alone deserves the name.”

There are, as every modern student knows, numerous unsolved problems concerning civilisation. For instance : Is civilisation one or is it many? Today, when we survey the modern world, we think of civilisation as a unity. Yet such a conclusion is not justified. The civilisation of our modern world certainly promises to become a unity under the influence of Western civilisation, but at present this union is far from being achieved. Former students of civilisation were too ready to think of human civi-

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lisation as a whole. Modern students see civilisation as consisting of many kinds of civilisations arising in different localities among different groups of human beings developing in very different ways and being replaced by other civilisations which have no organic connection with their predecessors. This is the view of Spengler in his *Untergang des Abendlandes*. He there describes nine great civilisations which in certain cases have interpenetrated and influenced each other, but which cannot be claimed to be directly and organically derived from each other.

Civilisation has never from the dawn of history, or pre-history, been a unity; nor has it moved forward in a straight line nor has it even moved upward in a spiral or helix.

Another set of problems arises out of the variations of civilisations. What are the causes of these variations? If mankind is one, why do human civilisations differ so much from one another?

I am not sure that the assumption that all mankind has a common ancestry is sound. I doubt if our biologists and anthropologists are agreed on this point. There is probably much evidence yet to be accumulated before certainty can be achieved. In any case, does it matter very much?

What, however, we are concerned with today is to develop a civilisation which shall secure human unity. Whether man originated in the Garden of Eden or in the Asiatic Archipelago or in Australia or in Northern China or in Central Africa or in all these localities together is of no practical importance in solving the problem of how to unite mankind. Human unity depends, not on our origin, but on what we are

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becoming; not on whence we came but whither we are tending.

As to the cause of variation in our civilisations, that is due in part, at least, to the character of the factors which have played their part in creating each of them.

One of the first to describe these factors was Montesquieu in the eighteenth century and our scientific historians have added to the number of these factors since his day. Racial qualities, geographical situation (particularly natural boundaries), climate, nature of the soil, political, social and religious institutions, possession of natural products—especially metals—will all contribute by their presence or absence to the character of a civilisation.

For us today the most disconcerting and practical problem is: Why do civilisations decay? When we study history, "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome," we feel that such wonderful achievements ought not to have suffered decline and decadence and destruction. Our feelings are those of the American humorist:

"It is and it hadn't ought to be."

The collapse of the Hellenic civilisation has perturbed us less than the "Decline and Fall" of the Roman Empire. No doubt this is due to the blessed fact that the flower of the culture of that wonderful Hellenic civilisation was marvellously saved from destruction and has been transmitted to our own times to the great enrichment of our own civilisation.

How much mental energy has been spent on deciding whether malarial fever caused by the un-

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drained marshes of the Campagna or the invading hordes of barbarians or an evil system of taxation or the Christian Religion brought about the collapse of the classic civilisation of Southern Europe!

It is very necessary, however, for the student of civilisations to realise that the past in this sphere is by no means the measure of the present and the future. The older civilisations were very restricted in range and resources, vitality and vigour, compared with the wide-spread civilisation of this age and what even promises to be the universal civilisation of the future. There are many signs today that human civilisation is tending to become one. Our two world-wars have served towards that end, but the achievements of our scientists, let this not be forgotten, have done and are doing far more than all our wars and their political alliances have done to make humanity realise its unity. When that one united civilisation is achieved we do not doubt that it will be a higher synthesis in which all that is best in our differing civilisations of today will have a permanent place. Nevertheless, we ardently hope that this single civilisation of the future, while possessed of unity, will avoid the danger of a dead and dull uniformity.

But what is civilisation? For I am conscious I have not yet produced any positive definition of it.

The best definition of civilisation that I have been able to discover I owe to Matthew Arnold: "Civilisation is the humanisation of man in society." (*Mixed Essays*, Preface, p. vi).

Like all definitions it demands for complete elucidation further definition. What is humanisation, in the highest sense of that term? And who constitute



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the society in which man is humanised? Many books have been written on civilisation by modern anthropologists, sociologists and historians.\* There are, however, two ancient classics on civilisation of pre-eminent significance, one written some 400 years before Christ and the other some 400 years after Christ, each of which goes to the heart of what civilisation really is.

The first of these classics is Plato's *Republic*; the second is St. Augustine's *City of God*. Our English translation of Plato's title is apt to mislead modern English readers who understand by Republic a State not governed by a monarch. This is not the meaning of Plato's title *Politeia* (πολιτεία) which signifies the constitution of a city-state or the administration of a civic body. Plato added a second title, *Or Concerning Righteousness* (ἡ περὶ δικαιοσύνης). By righteousness Plato meant the right relation of each citizen to every other citizen in the community and, the loyalty of the citizen to that relationship.

"Righteousness," for Plato, constitutes the essential basis and character of true civilisation. The "humanisation of man in society" would mean for Plato the growing understanding by man of the nature of his relations to his fellow-men in the human society in which he is placed and his loyal fulfilment of the social obligations which those relations entail.

Loyal Platonists will feel I am doing less than

\* I would particularly commend three luminous and succinct modern expositions; *Progress and Religion*, by Christopher Dawson (1931), *Christianity and Civilisation* by H. G. Wood (1942), and *Civilisation, Science and Religion*, by A. D. Ritchie (Pelican book).

justice to Plato in thus restricting his conception of civilisation to the relations of man to man.

Sir Ernest Barker, for instance, writes of Plato's ideal:

"In the *Republic*, Plato has constructed an ideal city, based upon right, and instinct with righteousness, which might almost be described as a city of God, and is actually described by Plato as 'laid up somewhere in heaven.' This ideal city was to be a model; and looking upon it, and trying to copy it, men might blot out some features from their cities, and paint in others, until 'they had made the ways of men, as far as possible, agreeable to the ways of God'." (Introduction to *The City of God*, p. xvi.).

This is no doubt a sound interpretation of the scope of the Platonic ideal; but in Plato's *Republic* the relationship of the citizens to God is not definitely inculcated or visualised. Although undoubtedly Plato's city is like the ideal city which (according to the *Epistle to the Hebrews*) the pilgrim patriarch was seeking—"the city which has the foundations whose builder and maker is God,"\* yet the society in which Plato's citizens achieve their ideal is the society of citizen with citizen. In St. Augustine's *City of God*, on the other hand, the society described includes the conscious relation of the citizens with the Divine Being who is the light of the city, "the Lord God is the light thereof . . . and his servants shall serve Him and His name shall be in their foreheads." (Rev. xxii; 4).

In Augustine's *Civitas Dei* it is through the primary conscious relationship of each citizen with God

\*(*Heb.* xi; 10).

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that the citizen is brought into right relationship with his fellow-citizens.

This Christian conception of the ideal civilisation transcends Plato's, yet it in no wise contradicts it. Augustine, like Plato, is not clearly convinced that his City of God does exist on earth except in defective and temporary ways. It cannot be claimed that Augustine ever conceived of the Kingdom of God being realised on earth in the form of a Christian Commonwealth. In the terrestrial sphere the Catholic Church, not a Christian Commonwealth, constituted the coming of the *Civitas Dei*. The foundation of the Holy Roman Empire in 800 A.D. as the coadjutor of the Holy Roman Church proved to be such a dismal failure as a Christian Commonwealth that we need do no more than merely refer to it here.

The citizens of the *Civitas Dei* whom Augustine describes as the Communion of Saints, form a society which is at the same time both terrestrial and celestial. Under the influence of this ideal the Roman Empire overwhelmed by the barbarians was replaced by, and in some way transmuted into, the Papal Church of Western Christendom; and Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* became the most influential factor in the creation of the new type of Christianity that arose out of this transmutation.

Thus Matthew Arnold's definition of civilisation as "the humanisation of man in society" becomes in the light of St. Augustine's ideal: the development of the divine nature of man in a society which is both divine and human.

Since 1914 a new phrase has come into use—"the breakdown of civilisation." By this phrase it is not

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the breakdown of our economic civilisation that is meant—although that has been severely strained—still less the breakdown of our mechanistic and scientific civilisation which since 1914 has made amazing advances. "The breakdown of civilisation" is the name we give to a collapse of those moral and spiritual foundations on which our western civilisation has been built, at least in England, since its conversion to Christianity.

This breakdown of civilisation, apparent since 1914, is not characteristic either of the British Commonwealth of Nations nor of the United States of America, but has taken place most markedly in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. The causes of this breakdown call for open-minded, courageous, energetic and judicious investigation from all who have the future of mankind at heart. And its exacting remedy will demand resolute action.

## II. RELIGION

HAVING CONSIDERED aspects of civilisation, I turn now to aspects of religion. If an adequate definition of civilisation be difficult it is much harder to secure an adequate definition of religion. Organised religions are so various, and every living religion is in a state of flux. The meaning of *religio* (the Latin parent of our English word religion) was in doubt even in the days of Cicero. It may mean that which arouses the sense of reverence or it may mean that which restricts and restrains—most probably *religio*

has both meanings—and stresses the duty of allegiance to both ideas.

(Max Müller, in the first of the Hibbert Lectures, provides from the stores of his vast knowledge of religion a number of definitions prefaced by the following significant observations :

“It is utterly useless to say . . . that religion meant this, and did not mean that; that it meant faith or worship, or morality or ecstatic vision, and that it did not mean fear or hope, or surmise, or reverence of the gods. Religion may mean all this.” (p. 13).

“When Thales declared that all things were full of the gods, and when Buddha denied that there were any *devas* or gods at all, both were stating their religious conviction. When the young Brahman lights the fire on his simple altar at the rising of the sun, and prays in the oldest prayer of the world, ‘May the Sun quicken our minds,’ or when, later in life, he discards all prayer and sacrifices as useless, nay, as hurtful, and silently buries his own self in the Eternal Self—all this is religion . . . How, then, shall we find a definition of religion sufficiently wide to comprehend all these phases of thought?” (p. 14).

Max Müller adds, however, that it may be useful to examine a few of the more recent definitions of religion. The first he selects is Kant’s, which insists that :

“When we look upon all our moral duties as divine commands, that constitutes religion.” (p. 14).

(Fichte, Kant’s successor, defines religion, not as morality, but as knowledge—insight into the deepest and the highest—ourselves and the Universe. It is a form of knowledge which sanctifies.

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Schleiermacher's definition differs widely from those of Kant and Fichte:

"Religion consists in our consciousness of absolute dependence on something which though it determines us, we cannot determine in turn." (p. 19).

Hegel, on the other hand, defines religion as perfect freedom:

"For it is neither more nor less than the Divine Spirit becoming conscious of himself through the finite spirit." (p. 20).

Professor Whitehead, inspired no doubt by the definition of religion which we owe to Plotinus that Religion is "the flight from the alone to the alone," tells us that Religion is "what a man does with his solitariness.")

(And yet if we continue this line of reflection: solitariness by itself is not enough: sorrow must accompany it as Goethe's song of the Blind Harper affirms:

"Who ne'er his bread in sorrow ate,  
Nor wept away the midnight hours,  
He knows you not, ye Heavenly Powers."

But religion is not only what a man does with his solitariness, or with his sorrow and his sufferings, but also what he does with his sin. A sardonic Frenchman said of God: He will forgive you, His *métier* is to forgive. At least in the higher religions, the sense of sin and its problems have done more to develop religion than man's solitariness, sorrows and sufferings:

"Blessed is the man whose unrighteousness is forgiven and whose sin is covered; blessed is the

man to whom the Lord will not impute sin," is an ideal of bliss created by the religious consciousness and is realised at that stage in religious evolution when the moral consciousness and the religious consciousness have been united. This stage of religious evolution is not rightly defined as morality touched by emotion but as the fusion of morality with religion.

But let us go back to the definitions of religion that we have cited. It will be obvious that these definitions are in terms excogitated by philosophers and express only the most developed aspects of religion. When we turn from the philosophers to the anthropologists we find ourselves in another religious world altogether. Salomon Reinach, perhaps the greatest of the French anthropological students of religion, in his brilliant treatise *Orpheus*, has defined religion in its earliest stages as: "A sum of scruples which impede the free exercise of our faculties"; and he adds:

"This minimum definition is big with consequences for it eliminates from the fundamental concept of religion God, spiritual beings, the infinite, in a word, all we are accustomed to consider the true objects of religious sentiment."

(This, he affirms, is "the irreducible basis of all Religion"—the *protozoon* of religion.) Here we are consorting with generations of primitive men. Some of them are our contemporaries, like the Australian Arunta and the Hottentots of South Africa, but not a few are our ancestors. Fear would seem to have played no small part in creating their gods, as Lucretius held of the primitive races of his day.

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*Genesis* refers to Isaac's God as the Terror of Isaac. (*Genesis* xxi; 42, 53.) And it is the cultus of these fearsome beings which constitutes religion in its earlier stages, whether animistic or totemistic or magical. They are the ground of that *mysterium fascinans tremendum* which, as Otto asserts in *Das Heilige*, constitutes the "Numinous"—the source of religious emotion. We see this in the utterance of Jacob after his theophany at Bethel. "How awful is this place. This is none other but the House of God and this is the gate of Heaven."

Religion in its primitive forms is not marked by insight into reality but by the most childish and grotesque of speculations and superstitions. Nor is it characterised by the sense of absolute dependence upon that which, although it determines man, cannot be determined by him. On the contrary, our anthropologists regard the earliest stage of religion to have been magic and the fundamental conviction of the magician is that he knows how to work Deity for his own purposes. He has learnt the secret, not of doing God's will but of making God do his will. Thus, religion cannot be identified with morality among primitive savages unless we are prepared to identify morality with systems of irrational and non-moral taboos)

As for religion regarded as freedom: this is a true description indeed of the Christian Religion, to do the will of whose Deity is "perfect freedom"—(*cui servire est regnare*). But such an ideal of religion is only reached as the result of a long period of religious development and is certainly not true of it in its



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earliest stages where it breeds slavish fears and irrational restrictions.

One of the most important conclusions derived from the researches of anthropologists is, that religion did not begin by being a pure ethical monotheism, and become subsequently corrupted by superstition and idolatries—on the contrary, religion in its earliest stages was united to the most incredible, grotesque and barbarous beliefs and practices. Only very gradually and with great effort were these crudities and absurdities replaced by beliefs and practices less grotesque and abhorrent. In some of its aspects the study of religion is a terrible study, full of cruelties, horrors, tyrannies, ruthless sacrifices of human victims to cruel Deities, more cruel even than their devotees. But there is a bright side as well—the heroism, the insight, the virtue and sanity of those who contributed to the ascent of religion; and often at what cost to themselves!

This is testified to by Sir James Frazer, the greatest of our British students of religion in his Gifford Lectures on *The Worship of Nature*, published in 1926, his crowning contribution to that wonderful series of volumes initiated by *The Golden Bough*. In his Introduction to *The Worship of Nature*, he writes:

“I am aware that the description of beliefs and customs which the enlightened portion of mankind has long agreed to dismiss as false and absurd, if not as monstrous, vicious, and cruel, is apt to be somewhat tedious and repellent; . . . Still I trust that an account even of crude theories and preposterous practices may not be wholly destitute of interest and instruction, if it enables us to picture to ourselves

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something of the effort which it has cost our predecessors to grope their way through the mists of ignorance and superstition to what passes with us of this generation for the light of knowledge and wisdom. They were the pioneers who hewed their way through a jungle that might well have seemed impenetrable to man: they made the paths smooth for those who were to come after: we walk in their footsteps, and reap at our ease the harvest which they sowed with labour and anguish. The gratitude we owe them for the inestimable service which they have rendered us should temper the harsh judgments which we are too apt to pass on their errors, on what a hasty verdict stigmatizes as their follies and their crimes; and the lesson which we draw from the contemplation of their long wanderings and manifold aberrations in the search for the true and the good should be one rather of humility than of pride; it should teach us how weak and frail is human nature, and by what a slender thread hangs the very existence of our species, like a speck or mote suspended in the inconceivable infinities of the universe."\* (Vol. I, p. 13 f.).

There is no doubt at all as to the reality of religious evolution. As it ascends it becomes increasingly moralised, rationalised, spiritualised. Some have held

\* It is of interest to note the change in Sir James Frazer's attitude towards religion brought about by his many years study of it. In his earlier religious researches he does not seem to recognise man's increasingly successful quest for God—the securing of "sane relations with the Eternal"—but on the contrary an obstinate religious irrationalism fighting a hopeless rearguard action against the advances of truth. In the abridged edition of *The Golden Bough* he wrote: "The history of religion is a long attempt to reconcile old custom with new reason, to find a sound theory for an absurd practice," (p. 477).

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that, in consequence of this, religion will cease to exist.

A Frenchman described the evolution of religion in three words: Polytheism, Monotheism, Atheism. M. J. Guyau's *Non-religion of the Future* argues strongly for this position; but to my mind unconvincingly.

Does the true line of human evolution demand that mankind should have no religion in the future? That is a very real problem for many thoughtful well-wishers of mankind today, often designated agnostics, secularists, humanists, atheists.

I think there are two things which lead modern educated people to disbelieve in religion and to conclude that mankind can get on beneficially without religion.

The first is due to the extremely conservative character of religion which causes it to retain myths, legends and traditions which although discredited by modern research, religion refuses to reject. This mixture of error with truth discredits religious claims and like a debased currency, drives a sound currency out of circulation. Hard as it may be for religious leaders, it is absolutely needful in a scientific age that what is not true should be definitely separated from the true and consigned to the lumber room. Nevertheless, hard as it is, the movement for rejecting error in religion is steadily gaining in power.

The second reason for the present-day decline of religion is that the scientific mind is satisfied with secondary causes and unlike the philosophic mind does not demand final causes to satisfy it. Napoleon, having read Laplace's *Mécanique Céleste* (which

accounts for the origin of the universe by the nebular hypothesis), said to its distinguished author: "I observe, M. Laplace, that you make no mention of God in your treatise." "No, sire," replied Laplace, "I have no need of that hypothesis."

For the scientific mind, to have discovered the *method* of a process is to have discovered its *cause*. Hence, for superficial scientific thinking evolution which is a creative method becomes the creative cause. If this be so, the thorough-going evolutionist feels he has no need for God as the uncaused cause of all things. The scientific abolition of God from the universe produced a profound sense of loss in the older type of scientist who had been brought up as a practising theist. Professor George Romanes, the Victorian biologist, driven, as he felt, by his scientific researches to disbelieve in the existence of a divine Creator, wrote, "The Great Companion is dead. For me the universe has lost its soul of loveliness."

Those scientists who have never been convinced theists, and they are on the increase today, do not experience this sense of loss, but their children and more probably their grandchildren will do so and will feel compelled to return to a theistic faith.

Anthropologists today are, I believe, agreed that in their researches they find religion everywhere. There have been exceptions to this conclusion by some of our earlier anthropologists, who failed to find evidences of religion among certain tribes, but it is generally agreed that their conclusions were mistaken, because they took too narrow a view of what constituted religion or were not sufficiently patient and searching in their inquiries. Religious

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people seem to be ever ready to deny the designation of religious to those whose religion is not the same as their own.

Parson Thwackum restricted the term religion to his own form of it:

“Now when I say religion I mean the Christian religion, and when I say the Christian religion I mean the Protestant religion, and when I say the Protestant religion, I mean the Church of England.”

Hence, we find the term atheist applied to Voltaire and Tom Paine, although Voltaire erected a Church to God (so its inscription asserts) and Tom Paine was a Deist. The medical profession has been regarded as the atheistic profession, and the proverb still survives: “Where there are three doctors, there are two atheists.” Charles Kingsley protested against speculative atheists being charged with atheism, and would only call those atheists who in their conduct and character denied the Eternal Goodness.\*

In human history what is called “a wave of atheism” represents, not a disbelief in God, but the coming in of a new conception of the Divine Nature and Divine Methods—a transition from an old religion to a new.

Although Marxist Bolsheviks described religion as the opiate of the people and conducted a drastic anti-God campaign against it, yet it is open to question whether it was not simply the recurring case of a new kind of religion bent on extirpating an established form of religion in which it had ceased to believe.

\* Letter to the editor of an Atheist Newspaper. *Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of his Life*. Vol. II, p. 91.

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Hence, Socrates, although the most religious of the Greeks, was put to death on the charge of atheism. And when Christians were brought into the Roman amphitheatre to undergo martyrdom for their religion the pagan mob shouted, "The atheists to the lions." Often the destruction of the statues of the Gods signified, not the destruction of religion, but that a new religion was taking the place of the old, and is in fact an indication of the vitality and vigour of religion itself. Thus, when it occurs, believers in religion should not wring their hands but lift up their heads—God's truth is marching on.

Auguste Sabatier wrote in a memorable phrase: "Mankind is incurably religious." This seems to be absurd to many hardworking clergymen, striving to propagate organised traditional religion in their parishes. They ask, as is natural enough, What is wrong with the people? But often the question they ought to be asking is: What is wrong with the religion I am striving to propagate?

It is the failure to recognise the need for the evolution of religion to meet new human needs, a new human outlook, a new cultural, social, political environment which is the cause of it being assumed that atheism and materialism are rampant and triumphant; whereas what is really needed is the elimination of atheism and materialism by a more vital and creative understanding and propagation of religion. I believe the evidence to be overwhelming for the proof that man's nature is essentially religious.

Just as mankind is essentially rational, in spite of what Thomas Carlyle said of his contemporaries—

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“Just think of it, twenty millions of them, mostly fools”;—as mankind is essentially moral, notwithstanding the multitudes of its immoralists: and essentially æsthetic, notwithstanding the amazing affronts offered by human beings to beauty; so mankind is essentially religious. Religion (like the mercy of God in *The Hound of Heaven*) is ever engaged in pursuing mankind and there is ultimately no escape.]

If this conclusion be true, then religion must possess immense significance and potentiality for mankind. This brings me to the question: Does religion contribute to civilisation increasingly as humanity advances to higher and higher stages of development, or does it decrease in influence and usefulness?

In short: Does religion in human history make for an augmentation of cultural values or the reverse?

This is a tremendous question and the answers given have varied much. Moreover, the answers are most difficult to summarise because in certain cases it is universal religion which is referred to and in other cases some form of the Christian religion.

When Lucretius wrote: *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum* (How vast are the evils into which religion has been able to seduce mankind), he was speaking of the pagan religions of the classical world, and in his *De Rerum Natura* he provided nine reasons against the acceptance of religion. But today it seems to be generally recognised that at heart Lucretius was not anti-religious but only the enemy of detestable forms of religion, all of which he regarded as due to false fears of the Deity. He knew nothing of the

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Christian religion, which declares that "God is Love" and that "perfect love casteth out fear," but nevertheless Lucretius was advancing towards that religious ideal.

Nothing seems capable of arousing more love or more detestation than religion. *Ecrasez l'infâme* was one of the slogans directed against the Church in the days of the French Revolution. Yet Napoleon who restored in France the Roman Catholic Religion which the Revolution had trampled underfoot, said of Jesus Christ:

"Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself have founded great empires: but upon what did these creations of our genius depend? Upon force! Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for Him." (Canon Liddon's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 222).

Many years ago on the Syrian coast near Beirut I found myself standing by the grave of E. T. Buckle, who wrote the *History of Civilisation in England* (Vol. I, 1857; Vol. II, 1861). His book, which made a great impression at the time of its publication, took the view that religion had had very little influence in the advance of civilisation. Religion was not a factor of human progress but a feature of it, a reflection of it in its various stages, whether of advance or decadence. His verdict runs as follows:

"The opinion of many persons that Religion is one of 'the prime movers of human affairs' is altogether erroneous." "Religion is among 'the effects,' not 'the causes' of civilisation.")

I think few sociologists would maintain this to-



day.\* Buckle was educated before the newer studies in religion and the newer studies of the origins and evolution of civilisation had developed. Tylor, Herbert Spencer, Tiele, Benjamin Kidd, and we may add H. G. Wells, have moved away from that point of view. Religion, as they see it, is a very important factor in civilisation: indeed an essential element in it. I cite some of these *testimonia* :

(Herbert Spencer wrote in his *Study of Sociology* :  
 "A religious system is a normal and essential factor in every evolving society." (p. 313).

Benjamin Kidd in his *Social Evolution* wrote :  
 "It is under the influence of these (religious) systems that the evolution of the race is proceeding: it is in connexion with these systems that we must study the laws which regulate the character, growth, and decay of societies and civilisations." (p. 318).

Tiele, the student of Comparative Religion, who contributed the article on "Religions" to an early edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, wrote:

"Religion is one of the mightiest motors in the history of mankind."

H. G. Wells states:

"It is ungracious and false to the true outline of history to deny the necessary part that the priest, the sacrifice, and magic ceremonial for tribal welfare, the early tribal religions, have played in this transfigura-

\* It is only fair to add that there are many notable thinkers since Buckle who have viewed religion with hostility and contempt. The best known of these is Bertrand Russell, who wrote in happier years:

"It is possible that mankind is on the threshold of a golden age, but, if so, it will be necessary first to slay the dragon that guards the door, and that dragon is religion."

*Has Religion Made Useful Contributions to Civilisation?* (p. 30).

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tion of the sub-human into the modern human mind, upon which all our community rests today."

(*Apologia for the Outline of History*. p. 54).

"The echo of ancient chanting,  
The gleam of altar-flames;  
The stones of a hundred temples  
Graven with sacred names;  
Man's patient quest for the secret  
In soul, in star, in clod:  
Some deem it superstition—  
And others call it God.

Like the tide on crescent sea-beach  
When the moon is new and thin,  
'They come, our soul's deep yearnings,  
Welling and surging in.  
They come from the mystic ocean,  
Whose rim no foot has trod:  
Some hold it idle dreaming,  
We know that it is God."

PROFESSOR CARRUTH



## Lecture Two

# MODERN CIVILISATION'S NEED OF A MODERN RELIGION

*Men think they can do without religion ; they do not know that religion is indestructible, and that the question simply is, Which will you have ?*

AMIEL

*Religion will not regain its old power until it can face change in the same spirit as does science. Its principles may be eternal, but the expression of those principles requires continual development.*

A. N. WHITEHEAD

*Christianity is at the cross-roads today, but what is often forgotten is that it has often been at the cross-roads before. The historical study of Christianity shows that the conception of a fixed, stereotyped, unchanging Christianity is a mere myth.*

HASTINGS RASHDALL

*As an independent Church, professing fallibility, the Church of England has claimed the right of acting without the consent of any other ; as a Church she claims, and has always exercised, a right of reforming whatever appeared amiss in her doctrine, her discipline, or her rites.*

EDMUND BURKE



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IN VIEW OF the evidence, positive and negative, the conclusion is forced upon us that religion is essential in human life and therefore that it is not possible to eliminate it. On the other hand, it is equally clear that individuals and communities out-grow their religions and in that case the religion ceases to be beneficial and must be replaced by some more vital, vigorous, and inspiring type. Therefore, the religious problem for the individual and for the society is not: "Will you have a religion or will you not have a religion?" but "What kind of religion will you have?" Professor Allen Menzies defined religion as "the inner side of civilisation." I do not wish it to be understood that I hold this definition of religion to be an adequate definition of religion in itself but I value it as defining the real relation of religion to civilisation. If this be true, that religion is "the inner side of civilisation" then it is of immense importance to every civilisation to decide what religion it will have.

Many will take the view that this decision is not within the power of human beings, but that it is

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determined for them by their heredity and environment. That has never been the conviction of the great religious founders and leaders. Had they taken that view there would have been no progress in religion. Traditionalism and not development would have characterised the History of Religion and stagnation and decay would have been its fate. The great religious leaders of mankind have always held that it was within the power of those whom they addressed to decide the character of the religion that should be theirs. Their attitude is expressed in words familiar to us all:

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed."

(*Deut.* xxx; 19)

The world is full of religions, but there is not one as it is organised today, which is able to satisfy the religious needs and demands of the modern world. This is no new situation.

In 1918, Silvanus Thompson, F.R.S., in his book, *A Not Impossible Religion*, emphasises this:\*

"The truth is that thousands are seeking for something that has never yet been presented to them; a religion that shall not be impossible for men of thought, knowledge and reverence." (p. 10).

What kind of religion could meet these needs and demands of modern civilisation?

\* *A Not Impossible Religion* by Silvanus Thompson, B.Sc., F.R.S. (John Lane, The Bodley Head), 1918.

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This question is urgent and inescapable. I give my answer under six heads, each of them outlining one of the needful qualifications for such a modern religion, yet I would not claim to show by the order in which I give them that any one of these qualifications is more important than the others, or less essential.

1. The modern world most urgently demands from religion today that it should be a *Unifying Force*.

Today the whole world is conscious of its divisions and of the dangers these divisions involve. All who seek for human welfare, from UNO downwards, recognise, in various degrees, the urgent need for world unity. A religion which is not going to contribute effectively to world unity is not a religion which the modern world will make its own. Schisms, sects, divisions and their schismatic leaders, great and small, belong to a type of religious fanaticism, isolationism, exclusiveness, which is as repellent to modern religious feeling as it is ineffective in contributing to the union of mankind. I do not for a moment think of religion as the only great unifying power which the modern world needs. There are many other unifying forces : scientific, economic and political, but here we are only concerned with religion as a factor in modern civilisation. Nevertheless, to be honest, I must confess that of all the potential unifying forces which are available to mankind today, I believe religion to be the most essential and the most influential, because it is the inner side of civilisation, and can be the most inspiring and uplifting influence in civilisation's moral and spiritual development and unification.



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Before all things it is needful that such a unifying religion should itself be one, and possess as its faith:

“One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.”

TENNYSON (*In Memoriam*).

Another factor in the unifying influence of this uniting religion must depend upon the conditions of admission to its religious fellowship. Here, by the way, it is needful to insist that, although for the individual soul modern religion must begin in communion with the one Divine Being, it must on no account remain individualist. John Henry Newman asserted that for him there were only two realities in the Universe: God and his own soul. The ideal for a world religion demands as its second stage the spirit which longs to embrace the whole world in that divine and human communion expressed so imperatively in the “Marching Orders” of Jesus to His disciples:

“Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, . . . and lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end.” (*Mt.* xxviii; 19 f.).

The religion the modern world needs must be universal in its comprehensiveness. Its spirit of comprehensiveness will then constitute not the least of its claims to universality. All mankind of every nation and colour, every degree of knowledge and culture, must be eligible for entrance into its fellowship. None who desire to share in its fellowship may be excluded, except by themselves.

There is a strong demand among ecclesiastics

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today for the right of discipline and the practice of excommunication. We are not opposed to discipline. Religion needs discipline, just as Art needs discipline. But the discipline needed is self-discipline, enforced by the individual on himself, and not a discipline enforced by others outside him. Not official excommunication by the society, but voluntary self-exclusion by the individual, must regulate its membership. It was the Christian Apostle of Love who wrote:

"They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." (1 *John* ii; 19)

The aim of this comprehensive society will be to achieve a world-wide brotherhood; one race, the human race; one religion, the religion of mankind.

But the unity which the one religion secures is in the first place the unity of man with the Divine Being. In this respect religious unity differs from all other kinds of unity: social, political, economic, national and international. Unity of individual human beings secured at first with the one God, extends next to all the worshippers of that one God, and so, the unity originating in unity with the Divine, becomes increasingly human in its extension. This gives to the unity secured by religion a quality of intensity, stability and endurance, as well as of expansion, which can transcend all other forms of unity, for its motto is: "All one in God." "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out."

2. The second quality which is demanded by the religious needs of the modern world is that its religion should be *evolving* and *creative*.

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By an evolving and creative religion we mean not only a religion that has evolved, but a religion which can evolve continually: and which by its advance into new experiences and its adaptation to them enlarges its ideals and creates new ones which subsume the old; "New occasions teach new duties."

The History of Religion, viewed as a whole from its lowest to its highest forms, exhibits a process of increasing rationalisation, moralisation and spiritualisation. Primitive Religion, as we have pointed out, is magical; it is not united to morality but to systems of irrational and unethical taboos. The modern world demands the union of the spiritual, moral and rational in its religion; and it also demands that each of these qualities should attain the highest level. This cannot be secured unless religion has the power to evolve—the right to evolve, and the duty to evolve—in these rational, moral, and spiritual spheres. Without these evolutionary forces, religion must become stagnant, decadent and ineffective in a modern community which, in virtue of being a modern community, is of necessity evolutionary.

An evolutionary civilisation demands an evolutionary religion. This does not mean that an evolutionary religion can afford to neglect the knowledge of its own history. To learn through what stages it has evolved can be of the greatest value to a religion in its future evolution both by way of inspiration and warning. Religious tradition and religious history are valuable servants but they can become very bad masters if slavishly obeyed. The needs of the present must constitute the inspiration of the present.

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“By what authority doest thou these things and who gave thee this authority?”

This is the most searching question which can be addressed to any religion. The answer to this question is “God.” But not God as He was known under the limitations in the environment of a past age, but God as He is unveiled to the prophets and saints, and it may be to the sinners also of the present age.

In an evolving religion, although the past cannot be allowed to tyrannise over the present, yet there is continuity between the religion of the past and the religion of the present. The God of ages past can also be relied on as the hope for years to come.

3. The third quality demanded by the modern world for its religion is that it must be a *scientific* religion—compatible with scientific truth and with scientific method. Indeed if it be not in this sense a scientific religion it cannot be an evolving religion. Such a religion will have three characteristics.

A. The first is that it makes truth its fundamental value. Without constant insistence upon truth as fundamental, the religion will cease to be credible and in consequence will forfeit the loyalty of intelligent and moral people. Scientific religion recognises with Francis Bacon, the father of modern science, that there is no vantage ground like standing upon the truth, and in the noble words of John Milton:

“For who knows not that Truth is strong next to the Almighty? She needs no policies, no stratagems, nor licencings to make her victorious . . . Give her but room.”

Scientific religion, unlike pre-scientific religion, does

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not demand miracles to prove the truth of its claims. For the scientist miracle which is *contra naturam* is blasphemy. The religion which bases its claims on miracles discredits its claims in a scientifically-minded community.

The scientist is convinced by experience that if an individual (or a church) does not put truth first in the scale of values there is no folly or superstition into which religion may not descend.

For the truly scientific mind, all truth is one, and there can be no real contradiction between different forms of truth or truth in different stages of reality. That being so, a scientific religion is compelled to accept as true all truth which research has discovered in the field of the physical sciences and in the fields of historical and literary criticism. The scientific mind has no use for a religion that will not do this.

B. The second characteristic of a scientific religion is that in learning and teaching religion it makes use of the modern scientific method. This modern scientific method is experimental or empirical.

This experimental method secures for those who use it convincing proof of the truth of the results secured which enables them to make it the basis for securing more truth. As a consequence there is no sense of finality in the advance into truth in the mind of the true scientist. With every advance he still feels, as did our second great founder of modern science, Sir Isaac Newton, that he is like a child gathering pebbles on the shore with the great ocean of truth lying untraversed and undiscovered beyond.

This sense of the infinity of truth yet to be discovered develops in the greatest scientists a profound

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humility; but a humility which in no way weakens their conviction that the truth they have secured is truth.

May I give an illustration from my own experience of the scientific method?

For four years I worked as a student of a branch of natural science in a modern university. At the outset the Professor said: "In this laboratory all our students accept evolution." I asked: "Do you then regard evolution as proved?" He replied: "That is not our way of looking at it. Evolution is our working hypothesis. We assume its truth as the best working hypothesis we know, and we use it for the purposes of research, but we recognise that we may as the result of that research, have to modify in various ways our convictions about it."

I am not citing him *verbatim*. It is all many years ago, but his statement made a profound impression on me at the time.

For the teacher as for the learner of a scientific religion, the great truths or affirmations of religion are working hypotheses. They are accepted in that sense but acceptance is only the first step. Each working hypothesis has to be proved by work, that is by research, which makes use of the experimental method.

The man who demands a scientific religion realises that to prove the truth of that religion he has to practise it. All he demands at the outset is that it should provide him with a working hypothesis which seems to be worth trying: not absolutely, but relatively more worth trying than any other working hypothesis that presents itself in the same field.

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C. The third characteristic of scientific religion is that it insists on freedom. This, the thinking man deems to be absolutely needful for a scientific religion: full freedom must be allowed for experiment. This means full freedom to make mistakes, but it also means faith in the experimental method which, if it be given time as well as freedom, will correct its mistakes. A scientific religion must demand freedom to test at every stage what claims to be religious truth. This will entail the constant rejection of error, sometimes necessitating painful and unpopular conclusions. A scientific religion cannot advance without tears nor without martyrs, nor without controversies (to be courteously conducted) mindful ever of Aristotle's dictum that:

"Although men differ about small things the reasons for their differences are never small."

This freedom, none of the greater organised religions has ever shewn itself ready to grant in all spheres—whether of speculative thought, or cultus, or ethical practice, or institutional organization. Spurgeon declared to an assembly of Baptists: "Whatever other religious bodies have done, the Baptists have *never* persecuted." When the applause which greeted this assertion had died down, Spurgeon added: "because the Baptists have never been strong enough."

The problem of freedom is, and not least today, and not only in the sphere of religion, a great problem, and not yet solved in theory and practice even in this free country, notwithstanding J. S. Mills' great Essay on Liberty—great though not without inconsistencies.\*

\* See Lord Lindsay's Introduction to J. S. Mills' *Essays* (Everyman).

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There is, of course, no problem of freedom in the case of the mystical religion of the individual, because this is restricted to the relationship of the individual to God. But in the case of the religions which are also corporate and institutional, the problem of freedom is bound to arise, for, as Bishop Creighton has pointed out:

“There is the claim of the individual to be free, but also the right of the society to be something.”

Here, as an Irishman would say, we have the father and the mother of a row; and only the exercise of the spirit of wisdom, justice, restraint and love can harmonise the claims of individual freedom with those of fellowship and co-operative unity.

It is in the sphere of religious organisation that the problem of freedom becomes acute. The solution as we see it is that the modern religious leader and organiser must surrender the right to command and must be satisfied to counsel, persuade, educate. He must decline to be an official in a religious system which inflicts pains and penalties on delinquent adherents. The modern religious fellowship must be voluntary. Nothing short of this can harmonise with that spirit of freedom which is the most treasured possession of Anglo-Saxon civilisation, and is, we hope, steadily becoming the possession of mankind.

“We must be free or die, who speak the tongue  
That Shakespeare spoke: the faith and morals  
hold  
Which Milton held.”

WORDSWORTH (*Natural Independence  
and Liberty*), xvi.



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Cavour's idea of a free church in a free state was derived, not from Papal Italy but from Switzerland and England, the European homes of freedom in politics and in religion.

4. The fourth demand from the modern world is that its religion should be *simple*. Simplicity is not superficiality. All profound truths are simple. As Lord Rutherford has asserted:

- "the fundamental problems have simple solutions; the non-fundamental problems complex solutions."

Religious evolution has been marked by immense simplification. Occam's razor: *Entia non multiplicanda sunt praeter necessitatem* : (entities must not be multiplied beyond that which is necessary) sought to check scholastic complexities, and substituted for them judicious simplification. Religion needs to stress what is profound for true religion deals with profundities. Profundity and simplicity are combined in the utterances of the great religious and ethical teachers.

"O Sage, is it possible to sum up your teaching in one word? was the question addressed to the dying Confucius by his scholars. The Sage replied: "Is not that word Reciprocity?"

So with Gautama, so with Mohammed, so with Hillel, supremely so with Jesus, whose sayings:

"Five words long upon the outstretched finger of old Time, sparkle for ever."

Our Bible abounds with such profound and simple sayings as familiar to us as they ought to be unforgettable.

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God is love; God is spirit. Love is the fulfilling of the law; seek and ye shall find. The wages of sin is death. The gift of God is eternal life. Despise not these little ones. Watch and pray. Narrow is the road that leadeth unto life. Man doth not live by bread alone. Where there is no vision the people perish.

St. Augustine said:

"Scripture contains pools at which lambs can drink, and depths in which elephants must swim."  
The pools and the depths are identical.

Religion, to be effective, needs to concentrate on essentials: it needs also to restrict their number. If we are to keep religion profound we must keep it simple; also if we are to keep it comprehensive—able to serve all of every degree—we must keep it simple if, moreover, we are to have religion as a unifying force we must keep it simple—and all are agreed that the modern world needs a religion which is profound, comprehensive and unifying. There are infinite varieties of human beings and freedom must be allowed in this sphere for differentiation; but there is a large common element in all human beings and in that common element the religious centre is found and to it religion must make its appeal—an appeal which is both profound and simple.

5. Fifthly: besides demanding that religion should be simple, the modern world demands that it should be *attractive*.

This demand for an attractive religion will seem to serious people to be just one of those claims that ought not to be made. Religion seems to them to be much too serious a thing for its attractiveness to be

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considered at all. Solemnity, asceticism, self-denial, penitence, a sense of unworthiness, profound awe, the experience of the dark night of the soul, trembling at the Word, humble thankfulness for undeserved mercies, are uppermost in the minds of these serious people when thinking of religion.

These are very real aspects of religion and of that higher stage of religion in which religion and morality have been united. Yet it may be questioned whether they represent the very highest stage. The great prophets of Israel voice religious ideals which seek to replace ascetic practices and "walking mournfully before the Lord of hosts" by social morality and obedience to the kind will of God.

Thus we have one of them citing God as enquiring from Israel:

"Is this such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? (*Isaiah* lviii; 5, 6).

We see it also in the condemnation by Jesus of the exacting demands made by the religion of the Scribes and Pharisees: "burdens grievous and heavy to be borne are laid by them on men's shoulders"—a contrast to the religion of Jesus with its invitation:

"Come unto me all ye who are burdened and heavy laden and take my yoke on you and learn of

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me and ye shall find rest unto your souls ; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

We see it in a later New Testament writer who describes his religion as that of perfect love which casteth out fear :

"He that feareth hath not yet been made perfect in love."

We see it in the Middle Ages, in the contrast between the Franciscans—*joculatores Dei*, God's merry men, and the Dominicans—*domini canes*, the sleuth hounds of heresy.

There is no doubt that today (and I do not regard it as a sign of either religious or moral degeneracy) that the modern world demands an attractive religion.

This is emphasised by Professor Whitehead in his Lowell Lectures, *Science and the Modern World* :

"The presentation of God under the aspect of power awakens every modern instinct of critical reaction. This is fatal ; for religion collapses unless its main positions command immediacy of assent. In this respect the old phraseology is at variance with the psychology of modern civilisations." (p. 237).

We all recognise that the God of our religion cannot really be a tyrant, a king of terrors, a God of vengeance, a torturer of immortal human souls ; but as Jesus taught us, One who is the Father of all mercies, the God of Love, the source of consolation and comfort, of moral strength and of eternal life.

This demand represents a rising tide in the religious ideals of Western civilisation largely due to the

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Liberal Movement in Reformed Christianity. This Liberal Movement came into existence a century ago in this country: a movement which may be described in one of its aspects as the humanisation of God. It is succinctly expressed in the epitaph in *David Elginbrod*, published by George Macdonald in 1862.

“Here lie I, Martin Elginbrodde,  
Hae mercy o’ my soul, Lord God,  
As I wad do, were I Lord God,  
And ye were Martin Elginbrodde.”

The ethic of this attractive religion must be philanthropic. It is concerned primarily with the relief of human sufferings; ignorance, fear, disease, poverty, overwork, oppression. Philanthropic love is its supreme virtue—freedom, political, social, domestic, economic justice and the exercise of the generosity, courage and self-sacrifice needed to defend and maintain these humane ideals and practices. These constitute the virtues of this attractive religion.

Another aspect of this demand concerns the place of æsthetics in religion. As man is rational, moral and religious, so he is æsthetic, and there is great need for modern religion to concern itself with the beautiful as well as with the good and the true. We do not mean simply the architecture of sacred buildings, sound standards in sacred music, simplicity and purity in pulpit eloquence, reverence and dignity in religious ceremonial: we refer to the need for developing sensitiveness to the beautiful, and above all that reverence for the beautiful which compels us to protect and preserve it in our everyday occupations.

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The appalling lack of reverence for beauty, especially natural beauty, in the defilement of our woods and moors by litter and vandalism demands inspiring teaching on reverence for beauty as an obligation of religion. It may be quite beyond our power to create beauty, the building of Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land—and in other lands, less beautiful—but we ought to love and protect beauty.

Art, in past ages, has owed much to the Christian Religion. Today it is natural beauty which stands primarily in need of the service of religion. In this sphere modern Christianity has something to learn from Buddhism, Shintoism and ancient Hellenic religion.

In yielding to the demand for modernity in religion we need to remember that in its way of worship religion is intensely conservative, and where the old can be preserved without offence to good sense and good taste it ought to be preserved. The repetition of the familiar, provided this be also the beloved, is full of tender memories and moving inspiration.

“As for some dear familiar strain,

Untired we ask and ask again.”

is as true of religion today as it was when Keble wrote.

But the quality of attraction in religion can have no influence of enduring value if it be not based on spiritual and moral reality and if it be not the vehicle of moral and spiritual values to human souls—the outward and visible symbol of an accompanying inward and spiritual grace.

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6. Hence the sixth quality demanded for a modern religion is that it should be *practical*.

This practical demand is characteristic of Western civilisation, and religion, to satisfy it, must be real. The demand is the fruit of a combination of the Latin with the Nordic spirit. A religion such as modern civilisation demands will not be satisfied with a conservation of values, but will demand an augmentation of values.

Father Bernard Vaughan, the eloquent Roman Catholic preacher, made two claims for his religion: that it has "got the goods" and that it is "delivering the goods" all the while.

A religion which has no goods to deliver, or if it has, fails, owing to lack of energy, ability or zeal, to deliver the goods, is not the religion for modern civilisation. The goods which modern civilisation ought to demand from religion are spiritual and moral. It is only religion which can provide a permanent flow of these goods of the highest quality.

Physical science can and does provide and deliver a vast variety of very useful goods, highly valued by modern civilisation, but it is only religion (in which the spiritual, moral and rational achieve the highest synthesis) that can secure and deliver the spiritual and moral goods essential for the welfare, for the progress, and for the ascent of modern civilisation.

The prediction of H. G. Wells that if modern civilisation is to escape destruction "a sharp ascent" and an immediate ascent is needful, is fundamentally a religious demand—a demand for those spiritual and moral values that only religion can effectively supply. These values can only be secured by religion

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bringing human beings into touch or communion with God, the supreme Source of these spiritual and moral values—God, conceived of not as a force, nor as a mechanism or organism, but as a Personal Being; and the contact or communion with Him is not mechanical, but personal—the intimate contact of personality with personality.

“Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet:

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.”

TENNYSON (*The Higher Pantheism*)

It is essential for modern religion to hold fast to the Personality of God, because, owing to popular misconceptions of the nature of personality derived from mechanistic or organic modes of thought, there is a great temptation to deny the existence of Divine Personality. The characteristic of personality is the faculty of self-transcendence. This self-transcendence varies in degree in different personalities. The greater the personality, the greater is the power it possesses of self-transcendence. In Shakespeare it far surpasses that of ordinary men. This power of self-transcendence enables a personality to enter into the personality of others. In the case of an infinite personality this power of self-transcendence, assuming the form of immanence in other personalities, can be conceived of as being universal. Thus in divine personality, individuality and universality are reciprocal. This being so we can conceive of every human personality as being indwelt by God in varying degrees and as reciprocally dwelling in God.



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This way of conceiving of Divine Being and our personal relation to Him provides strength and inspiration for the individual human personality which can be secured by no other conception of Divine Being, and it is capable of experimental development and verification.\*

A modern religion must not only proclaim a right conception of the Divine Being, but it must also inculcate right methods of entering into relations with Him. The history of religion abounds with wrong conceptions of the Divine Nature: not simply defective and inadequate conceptions—godlets, not God—but morally evil conceptions—devils, not Deity.

If men "grow inly liker that they kneel before," the spiritual and moral quality of the Deity proclaimed by a religion is of supreme importance. Only second in importance to this is the method of securing and maintaining communion with Deity.

As religion has abounded with false conceptions of Deity, so it has abounded with false methods of seeking relations with Deity—in rites which are magical, cruel, grotesque, ineffective, such as those of the priests of the Zidonian Baal cutting themselves with knives as they cry: "O Baal, hear us."

The perfection of communion with the Divine Being is only attained and maintained by surrender and obedience to the Divine Will. But how is spiritual and moral strength to be secured which will enable man to do the Divine Will?

\* The argument for belief in an Absolute and Universal Divine Personality, both transcendent and immanent, is succinctly presented by Professor John Macmurray in his Essay "Objectivity in Religion," published in B. H. Streeter's *Adventure*. (Macmillans, 1927).

All the higher religions emphasise the tremendous character of the struggle between good and evil in the soul of man—the black horse, as Plato saw it, striving ever to pull the chariot of the soul down, while the white horse strives to draw it up. The religion which can effectively enable the white horse to triumph is the religion which modern civilisation needs.

In the old religions men relied on magic to enable them to secure Divine help. Today, they are seeking the aid of psychologists; and not in vain, for not a few psychologists prescribe sound religious methods for their patients. We dare not assert, much as we believe in the need which ethics has of the spiritual strength which religion can give, that no human being can without the aid which he consciously receives from religion achieve conquest over evil in himself. Yet it is perfectly clear that for most human beings the spiritual strength which religion can give is absolutely needful. St. Augustine in his *Confessions* witnessed to this when after an intense and prolonged struggle with evil he uttered the prayer to God: "Give what thou commandest, then command what thou wilt." The same truth is proclaimed in St. Paul's affirmation: "I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me."

In any case it is clear that the modern world would have little use for a religion which could not enable good to triumph over evil in the soul of man. This is the modern miracle worked by religion.

Anskar, the apostle of Sweden, in an age when the power to work miracles was regarded (as it is today in the Roman Church) as a necessary proof of saint-

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ship, declared he had no desire to work any miracle except that of a perfectly holy life. In this way and in this way only is the practical quality of religion demonstrated for the modern man.

Rightly or wrongly, unlike primitive and mediæval Christendom, the modern world is not primarily concerned with religion as a preparation for a future life. Its question is : What can Religion do for us here and now?

The modern world would reject a religion which could only produce beings such as Mandell Creighton describes :

“Good as gold, fit to be saints in heaven but of no earthly use.”

To sum up :

The following seem to be the six qualities which modern civilisation demands from a modern religion: that it should be a unifying force; that it should be evolutionary, scientific, simple, attractive, practical.

It will be objected, and by those whose objection deserves serious attention, that all six qualities which I have named are supplied by Humanism and that Humanism has the great advantage of not demanding for its acceptance the unproved hypotheses which a theistic faith demands.

Humanism is an ambiguous term and lucidity demands that it should always be united to a defining adjective. This is maintained by Dr. Fulton, Principal of Trinity College, Glasgow, in an article entitled “True or Integral Humanism” in the *Expository Times* of September, 1946. Dr. Fulton divides humanism into two types, anthropocentric and

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theocentric. He does not however think scornfully of anthropocentric humanism. On the contrary. He writes :

"I cannot withhold approval of the merely humanistic outlook in so far as it acknowledges man's dignity in the creation."

"In many ways man is a frail creature, a reed liable to be broken by the wind. But, in Pascal's famous phrase, he is a reed that thinks; and, as Pascal added, all his dignity consists in thought. . . . All this is acknowledged in much of modern secular or anthropocentric humanism and sometimes, as de Burgh has remarked, nobly applied." In illustration of this Dr. Fulton cites a passage from Emil Brunner :

"As the butterfly is attracted by the light, so irresistibly is man drawn by this higher element, whether it be the 'truth' which he does not yet know and by which he tests his thought, or 'righteousness'; 'the good' or 'the beautiful,' 'the perfect' or 'the holy,' or even that which is 'truly human' [mark the phrase]! . . . Just as the tension of the bow-string makes the bow, so it is this tension between him and this higher element which constitutes the essential human quality in human existence, without which man would be only a particular kind of animal."

The weakness of anthropocentric humanism is not in what it affirms—what it affirms is true. Its weakness is in what it denies. It denies the existence of an Eternal Being in whose nature man shares and in communion with whom man's personality can be

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developed and perfected. This was realised by the greatest of the classical and mediæval humanists. Our modern anthropocentric humanists, as Berdyaev points out, in losing their faith in the personality of God must inevitably end in weakening if not actually destroying the personality of man. When man loses God, the true spiritual centre of his being, he creates for himself false centres at the periphery of his life and initiates a process by which man inevitably weakens and depreciates his own personality. For when man makes himself and not God the measure of all things he becomes the victim of false standards of value and deceptive ideals which destroy the sacredness of human personality and makes social utility the highest good.

What mankind really needs for its moral and spiritual evolution is what has been called a three-dimensional humanism in which the individual man, his neighbour and their God all have their proper place and function.

## Lecture Three

# THE WAY OF FULFILMENT

*We are to study the Divine in and through the human. By looking for the Divine side by side with the human, instead of discerning the Divine within the human, we miss the significance of them both.*

R. C. MOBERLY

*We are far too apt to limit and mechanize the great doctrine of the Incarnation, which forms the centre of the Christian faith. Whatever else it may mean, it means at least this—that in the conditions of the highest human life we have access, as nowhere else, to the inmost nature of the Divine. “God manifest in the flesh” is a more profound philosophical truth than the loftiest flight of speculation that outsoars all predicates and for the greater glory of God, declares Him unknowable.*

A. S. PRINGLE-PATTISON

*It must be said that the question of the future of Christianity is the question of the future of religion. For what we have learned in the course of our wanderings through the history of religion is precisely this fact, that the Christian religion is absolutely superior to all other religions, and that Christianity represents the highest point which religious development has reached.*

WILHELM BOUSSSET

Hal:      *The next religion? Before we’ve worked out the last? What have you found more beautiful or*

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*uplifting than the words of Christ? And this religion has the advantage of being already organised—it carries the inspiration and consecration of the centuries.*

Stephen: *And their encrustation of error! And their petrifications!*

Hal: *Then vivify it, scour it, bring it back to the Founder. Perhaps Christ's own religion has never had a chance—perhaps that's the next religion.*

ISRAEL ZANGWILL

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IN HIS PREFACE to the Kingdom of Christ,\* F. D. Maurice contrasts what he calls a Gospel of Notions with a Gospel of Facts. Having outlined a Gospel of Notions, I now present its realisation in a Gospel of Facts.

Supposing we are agreed that modern civilisation needs a religion, how is that religion to be secured? There are two alternatives; either to create a new religion or to adopt one of the existing religions of mankind. I believe that the creation of a new religion, capable of inspiring our modern civilisation, is impossible. Auguste Comte's attempt, when he created Positivism, proved a dismal failure. If Marxism was really an attempt to create a new religion, and not merely a new economic and political system, it is equally clear that as a religion it is a failure. Secularism, materialism, anthropocentric humanism, if they can be called religions, are also failures for they really constitute the negation of spiritual religion and for the modern world religion which is non-spiritual is as ineffective as a religion which is irrational or non-moral.

The only practical and promising policy is to select from the great existing religions the one which

\* Second edition.



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in its essential character promises most for our purpose; and then whole-heartedly adopt it and adapt it.

There is not the slightest doubt that the religion which the modern world needs to adopt and adapt is the Christian Religion. I am not denying for one moment that the other great living religions, particularly the *Founded Religions* (religions with a personal Founder) have much to their credit as factors in the great civilisations which enshrine the spirit of these religions. But not one of these religions is capable of meeting the religious demands and needs of the modern world.

It may be argued that I am quite wrong in holding that Christianity can meet the Universal religious need. It is urged that the religious ideals and needs of the West are entirely different from those of the East and that no single religion can meet the needs of both.

This contention is not sound. Christianity, which as soon as it broke the shackles of Judaism claimed to be *the* Religion for all mankind, has been ever since slowly but surely justifying its claim.

Its adherents number some five hundred millions today and it is the largest of the world religious communions. Its adherents are found among all the great races of mankind. Moreover, its missionary vigour and propagandist success may claim, if we accept the recent statements of Latourette and McLeod Campbell, to be as great in this age as in the past or even greater.\*

cf. *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, by Professor K. S. Latourette (Eyre and Spottiswoode. 25s.).

*Christian History in the Making*, by J. McLeod Campbell (Church Assembly Publications Board. 15s.).

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It may be maintained, however, that what Christianity is gaining in Asia and Africa it is losing in Europe and America. Certain sinister facts support this contention. These sinister facts make it clear that Christianity as it is, cannot become the religion of mankind. It is hopelessly divided and is not so near achieving reunion as it was twenty-five years ago. Its authorised religious teaching contains numerous myths and superstitions which discredit it in the judgment of truth-loving people. Studdert Kennedy uttered the inmost convictions of many when he said:

“It is awful to realise that when one stands up to preach Christ, the soldier feels that you are defending a whole ruck of obsolete theories and antiquated muddles.”

It is, of course, quite possible to explain these schisms and superstitions in the light of church history but it is not possible to make the religion which maintains them the religion of mankind today.

Modern Biblical study has brought to light the true history of the origin and development of Biblical Religion. This true history differs surprisingly—and as many have felt most painfully—from the traditional accounts of the origin and development of the Religion of Israel and the origin and development of the Christian Religion. Nevertheless, these critical results have performed an inestimable service to the Christian Religion by making it clear that those features of traditional Christianity which to the modern mind are most incredible and repellent are not essentials of the Christian Religion. It would take volumes to prove this statement, but this, broadly

speaking, is the assured result of our modern critical studies.

The History of the Christian Church is a very remarkable history; perhaps "wonderful" is the word which should be applied to it. It alternates amazingly in periods of light and darkness, victory and defeat, spirituality and worldliness, insight and blindness. It has magnificent achievements to its credit and incredible corruption, degradation and delinquency in its record.

When we study the life of the Founder of the Christian Religion and the message of His Gospel, it seems at first sight impossible that the subsequent history of His Religion should be such as it is. St. Paul in his day spoke of that religion entrusted to him and to his fellow-apostles as "a treasure in earthen vessels". When we reflect on the vicissitudes of Christian history we may well marvel that so much of the treasure has been preserved even though at times misinterpreted and mis-applied but more often buried under accumulations, some derived from Judaism, some from classical Paganism, and some from the scholastic speculations and ecclesiastical dogmas of later ages. It is only by getting back to the essentials in the Religion of Jesus and by uniting on the basis of those essentials that modern civilisation can secure the religion which it needs so greatly, and the Christian Church secure that which on the one hand will heal its schisms and on the other hand will enable it to convert mankind to "the truth as it is in Jesus."

Many objections will be made against this endeavour at the outset both by Christians and by non-

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Christians. It will be said that it is a very reactionary policy to go back two thousand years in our religious evolution; and that, furthermore, it is really impossible to do so. Christian history contradicts and confutes both these objections.

It is not the least of the proofs of the vitality of the Christian Religion that it has gone back on a number of occasions to its primal sources and has received from them the inspiration and strength which have enabled it to make further advances. When the Christian Religion is unable to return to Jesus in order to go forward with the spirit of Jesus it will be a sure sign that Christianity has reached decrepitude and that its dissolution is imminent. To go back to the point in the road where you took the wrong turning, to go back to recover the petrol you negligently left behind, is neither reactionary nor unnecessary if you would reach your destination.

The traditionalist Christian will ask: What is this original and essential Religion of Jesus which you regard as likely to be so much more effective today than the Christianity of our great historic churches?

The difficulties which face the modern student in answering this question are immense. Our New Testament sources are of a varied character proceeding from different hands and written from different points of view. Our Synoptic Gospels, in the light of the researches of our source-critics and form-critics, differ much in their historical reliability; so also the Fourth Gospel and the *Acts of the Apostles*. A compressed summary of critical conclusions which permits no space for stating the reasons for the conclusions, is all I can offer here and now. My

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selection, rejection, and interpretation of historical sources has been determined by the methods of literary and historical criticism and not by a desire to compose a picture which will attract modern-minded people.

Let it be said at the outset that in a number of His views Jesus was restricted by the knowledge and outlook of His age, locality and nation. He seems to have believed in hosts of demons who caused diseases which could be cured by exorcising the demons. His view of the Old Testament was pre-critical. He knew nothing of Hexateuchal criticism. He probably held that all the Psalms were written by David and the Wisdom Literature by Solomon. His views of nature were pre-scientific and non-evolutionary.

It is not, however, the things in which Jesus was in agreement with the knowledge and religious convictions of His contemporaries that make Him significant but those in which morally and spiritually He differed from them and transcended them, and it is on these things that I have concentrated.

Dean Inge has said that the Religion of Jesus was the religion of a layman addressed to laymen.

It is important to realise this lay background. Jesus was a layman but a layman in a nation possessed at that time of a remarkably high degree of religious education and religious devotion. As a layman He attended His Synagogue and was so well-educated as to be able to read the Scriptures publicly in its services. It is true that Jesus was not a priest or a Levite, but there was another Order of religious leaders in His nation to which, it seemed to many of

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His countrymen, Jesus belonged. That Order was the prophets. He was called the Prophet of Nazareth. The Order of prophets had been extinct for centuries but was revived in John the Baptist—the greatest prophet of the Old Order, as Jesus counted him.

Jesus, it is clear, viewed Himself in another light. He was the Messiah—the Anointed One, the Christ of the Kingdom of God. Jesus saw Himself neither as a prophet nor as a follower of John the Baptist, but as one anointed by the Divine Spirit to proclaim and bring in the Kingdom of God on earth. A new religious era had dawned—the era of the Kingdom of God, and Jesus was divinely called to be its Messiah. He declared:

“The Law and the Prophets were until John: since then the Kingdom of God is preached.”

(*Lk.* xvi; 16.)

John was the greatest and the last of the Old Order: Jesus the first of the New Order.

The call to the Messiahship came to Jesus at His Baptism. It was then the Divine Voice hailed Him: “Thou art my Son, the Beloved”—both are Messianic titles. The original text of *Luke* (iii; 22 so Streeter) adds, “Today have I begotten thee” (cf. *Psalms* ii; 7). It was the Messiah’s birthday. This Messianic Birth constituted Jesus the Head of a new race, the First-born among many brethren—the sons of the Kingdom of God. It was for Him, according to our earliest account in *Mark* (i; 9-11) a subjective spiritual experience. In later accounts it becomes an objective and miraculous experience, shared by others. (*Mt.* iii; 16, 17. *Lk.* iii; 21, 22. *Jn.* i; 32.)<sup>1</sup>

The much later Virgin Birth narrative based on a

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misinterpretation of a mistranslation of *Isaiah* vii; 14 (lxx) is an attempt to prove the Messianic Sonship of Jesus by making it a miraculous fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy.

The proof of the reality of the Divine Call of Jesus to His Messiahship can only be tested by the quality of His personality, the quality of His Messianic Gospel and the quality of the influence exerted by both in human history. The student of Comparative Religion in the light of what followed on the Divine Call of Jesus, can claim that it initiated a new stage in the evolution of the religion of mankind.

The Messianic Call was the Messiah's secret. He declared it openly to none and silenced those who hailed Him as Messiah because their faith in Him had secured their healing yet His Messianic consciousness expresses itself again and again in indirect ways and is certainly the supreme inspiration both of His Mission and His Message. At Cæsarea Philippi He admits His Messiahship to His Apostles and later He symbolises it publicly by Messianic fulfilments of Old Testament predictions but it is not until challenged by the High Priest at His trial before the Sanhedrin that He declares it plainly. Had He then evaded the confession of it He would have been disloyal to His conviction and have discredited His Gospel. The crisis had come *aut Christus aut nullus*. He was condemned to death and died as the Messiah and the Martyr of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus, in calling His Religion the Good News of the Kingdom of God was not original; but He was profoundly original in His conception of the nature of that Kingdom and of the means by which it would

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be realised on earth. Contemporary Judaism writhed under the Roman yoke. Jewish patriots, as nationalist as they were religious, looked for Divine deliverance by the establishment of a Divine Kingdom in which they would be the *Herrenvolk* and the pagan world their subjects. Some held that the Kingdom would be established by a divine irruption of angelic powers; others that it would be established by the sharp swords of the revolutionary zealots. Some held that the earthly ruler of this Kingdom would be a Prince of the House of David: others that he would be a pre-existent celestial being.

No slogan could have aroused so much interest and enthusiasm as that with which Jesus heralded His Mission: "Good News of the Kingdom of God." But it became more and more apparent that the conception which Jesus had of the Kingdom of God and the method of its coming and its membership was anything but popular. Much that the Jews ardently anticipated in the Kingdom of God was absent from the Gospel of the Kingdom as proclaimed by Jesus. For Jesus, the Kingdom of God was not patriotic and political, not militarist and nationalist, not irruptionist and apocalyptic. No day of wrath was to herald it in, no series of divine judgments was to strike terror into the hearts of the Gentiles.\* There were to be no crowns and sceptres for Jewish victors, nor was the Temple at Jerusalem to become the world centre of divine worship. The Gospel of Jesus satisfied none of the religious schools

\* It is significant that when St. Luke (iv; 18) records Jesus as reading out in the Synagogue of Nazareth the opening passage of *Isaiah* (lxi) as foretelling His Mission, He does not include the words "the day of vengeance of our God."



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in contemporary Judaism. It was not ascetic, like the followers of John the Baptist: it was not legalist, like the Pharisees: it was not patriotic, like the Zealots: it was not hierarchical, like the Sadducees. It is no surprise to one who understands the religious background and environment in which Jesus proclaimed His Gospel that it was misunderstood, misinterpreted, opposed, condemned and rejected by His nation. The wonder is that it survived at all. His message to John the Baptist testifies to His own consciousness of the disappointment which His Gospel was bound to bring to many: "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended by Me." Nevertheless, at the outset of His mission, He secured immense success. This was due to His commanding personality, His fearlessness, sincerity and sympathy: His inspiring and poetic eloquence, and the popularity aroused by His faith-healing. But it was not long before the *unpopular* features of His Gospel began to manifest themselves.

The emphasis which He placed on "inwardness" in religion made His preaching offensive to the religious classes. It necessitated His depreciation and condemnation of externalism in religion. Much importance was attached to externalism by the Pharisees, largely due to their insistence on the strict observance of the three hundred precepts of the Tradition of the Fathers intended to guard the great commandments of the Law. This encouraged a flaunting religiosity and a meticulous formalism which sharply and on every occasion distinguished the Pharisee from the non-Pharisee. When the Pharisee fasted, when he gave alms, when he prayed,

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he attracted attention. Jesus condemned this religious exhibitionism. He called it hypocrisy or play-acting. "When you fast," said He, "Wash your face so that you may not appear to be fasting. When you pray go into your inner chamber and shut your door so that no one but your heavenly Father shall hear your prayers. When you give alms don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."

Another form of religious insincerity with which the inwardness of the Religion of Jesus came into conflict was that religious casuistry which permitted the over-riding and neglect of moral duties on the plea that a higher religious obligation sanctioned this. For instance, a religious vow to give money to the Temple might be used to relieve a son from the moral duty of maintaining his father.

This inwardness in the Religion of Jesus brought Him into conflict with the numerous religious observances on which great emphasis was laid by Judaism generally. Jesus did not require His disciples to be scrupulous in their practice of ablutions before meals nor in the observance of public fast days. He even taught that to eat unclean food could not defile a man morally and spiritually; only a man's evil passions could do that. We have an echo of this in St. Paul's assertion that "the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (*Rom. xiv; 17.*)

The greatest of Jewish religious institutions was the Sabbath and here Jesus exercised and permitted a laxity which was most offensive. His axiom that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath allowed the relaxation of Sabbath obser-

vance where human compassion and human needs so required.

In the days of Jesus, Jewish Religion was dominantly legalist. The Religion of Jesus was essentially prophetic. It cut at the roots of legalism by substituting loyalty to moral and spiritual relationships and principles instead of a superficial obedience to ordinances. This insistence on religious inwardness had far-reaching effects, it became the source of spiritual freedom and so transmuted the religion of the Law into the religion of the Spirit as St. Paul was the first to realise fully among the disciples of Jesus when he wrote "With freedom did Christ set us free" — "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

By thus liberating religion from the artificialities of its legalist and ceremonial burdens, religion was rendered *natural* and the daily work duly done as service to God and man became religious ordinances. As St. James wrote:

"Pure and undefiled religion (literally *cultus*) offered to the Divine Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."  
(James 1; 27).

In this way religion became identified with all that was highest in human nature instead of conflicting with it as demanded by obedience to taboos. This making religion *natural* by Jesus might be better described as making religion *humane*. And so religion instead of adding to the burdens of life reduced those burdens by enabling men to bear not only their own burdens but, where needful, the burdens of others

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also. This function of religion finds its profoundest expression in the invitation of Jesus :

“Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest . . . for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (*Mt.* xi; 28).

This liberation of religion from burdensome regulations, from senseless taboos, from trivial observances, from irritating restrictions, all of which claimed to be religious essentials, demanded immense moral courage from the Liberator; for in Judaism the heretic is not the man whose speculative thinking is unorthodox but he who refuses to observe the traditional customs of his religion. The cause of true religion demanded this liberation since one of its deadliest enemies can be the spit and polish type of religion.

Jesus not only preached but practised this natural humane and non-ascetic religion and as a result was condemned as irreligious and self-indulgent.

“The Son of Man came eating and drinking and ye say: a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners.”

But this humanisation of religion brought within the sphere of its influence some who would otherwise have remained outside. To Zacchæus, to the Magdalene, it offered a new life and a divine fellowship from which they had hitherto been excluded; and justified the conviction of Jesus that

“There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

So far I have presented aspects of the Religion of

Jesus in which it differed from contemporary Judaism but His Religion demands a more comprehensive presentation in the light of His Good News of the Kingdom of God.

What was His Good News of the Kingdom of God? This Good News of the Kingdom of God concerned its *nature*, its *advent*, its *membership*.

For Jesus, the Kingdom of God is where God's will is done. The two are equated in *Matthew's* version of the Lord's Prayer: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." It is by man's doing God's will that the Kingdom of God comes on earth. By their loyal service to the Kingdom men enter into it and possess it, and the Kingdom reciprocally enters into them. The Kingdom thus becomes for them a moral and spiritual possession—the treasure hid in a field, the pearl of great price. The values of the Kingdom are primarily spiritual and moral values. In this sense it is "other-worldly." It is not "other-worldly" in the sense that it is all up in the sky or that it is only realised in a future life.

The Fourth Gospel, "the Spiritual Gospel" as Clement of Alexandria called it, equates the Kingdom with Eternal Life—the Life of God in the soul of man here and now. Hence Jesus, in contrast to contemporary Judaism, did not conceive of the Kingdom as a visible entity. Jesus is reported as saying to Nicodemus:

"Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." (*John* iii; 3.)

When asked "when the Kingdom of God should come," Jesus replied:

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"The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you."  
(or among you) (*Lk.* xvii; 20, 21.)

It has arrived before you anticipated it.

The Kingdom came with Jesus and entered into the hearts and lives of those who accepted His Gospel. Hence the apostolic preachers of the Kingdom could warn those who rejected their preaching: "Be sure of this, the Kingdom of God has come nigh unto you." (*Lk.* x; 11).

The Mission of Jesus was to bring in the Kingdom and to inspire men to enter into it. For Jesus it was a here and now Kingdom to be possessed and enjoyed here and now. Jesus proclaimed, what Professor Dodd has called in an illuminating phrase, a realised eschatology. All the good things predicted by Israel's prophets as coming to pass in the last times had arrived. They were here ready to be possessed by those who had the faith to see them, the purity of heart to desire them, the single-minded resolution to make them the supreme thing in their life. This must have seemed a Barmecide Feast indeed to those who were otherwise-minded.

The *advent* of the Kingdom was equally disappointing. There was nothing spectacular about it. It demanded no zealot victories nor angelic hosts to establish it. Invisible in its nature, unseen, except by those born from above, the Kingdom was also invisible in its advance. This invisible advance of the Kingdom, Jesus compares to growth in the vegetable world and to the process by which the heaven

invisibly permeates the meal in which it is hidden. (*Mt.* xii; 33. *Lk.* xiii; 21.)

For Jesus, it would seem the coming or advance of the Kingdom of God is not apocalyptic and cataclysmic but a moral and spiritual process operating invisibly but producing visible effects.

I am well aware that our apocalyptic eschatologists who follow Schweitzer, F. C. Burkitt, Alfred Loisy and other great New Testament scholars will not agree with this view for they are convinced that Jesus Himself predicted that the *parousia* was imminent and that within a very brief period the Son of Man would return in visible majesty to terminate terrestrial history and pronounce final judgment on the human race.

I do not deny the great service rendered by Schweitzer to Christian scholarship, and not least by compelling a more searching criticism of the Gospel records of the Mission and Message of Jesus. But that searching criticism has also led many to reject Schweitzer's picture of an unknown Jesus, a fanatical visionary, proclaiming an "Interims-Ethik" and an apocalyptic advent which subsequent terrestrial history has discredited. Like Cyril Emmet and B. H. Streeter, Professor Dodd and Professor T. W. Manson are unable to agree with Schweitzer's conclusion.\*

The most cogent and compressed summary of the case against the Schweitzerian eschatologists is presented by Dr. Glasson in his recently published essay, *The Second Advent*. Although Dr. Glasson presented it as a thesis for the London University

\* See Appendix II, the *Parousia*.

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D.D., the volume is extraordinarily popular in its style and I venture to commend it to those who are unacquainted with the pros and cons of this important controversy.

We are far from denying that there is a futurist eschatology taught by Jesus but it is not an apocalyptic eschatology fulfilled by a visible return to earth by Jesus as Judge in a world assize. According to the non-apocalyptic view of the Coming of the Kingdom, the Kingdom is coming *all the while*; it comes by prayer for its coming; it comes by the preaching of the Gospel to all nations; it comes by the promised presence of the Divine Spirit in the hearts of those devoted to the extension of the Kingdom among mankind.

Did Jesus believe that the Kingdom of God would triumph? According to undoubted teaching of Jesus preserved in the Gospels, the answer is Yes. The Kingdom of God, the tiny grain of mustard seed, smallest of all seeds sown by the farmer on the land, will become the greatest of all herbs; it will put forth great branches in which the birds of the heavens shall build their nests. The leaven of the Kingdom hid in the meal of human society will operate until the whole is leavened.

The statement of Jesus that narrow is the road that leadeth unto life (*Mt.* vii; 14) (the life of the Kingdom) and few there be that are finding it, is not a prediction of the future but describes the contemporary situation—Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots are crowding the Broad road, but the followers of Jesus on the narrow path are few indeed. The fact that Jesus bids His disciples to pray “Thy Kingdom come



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on earth as it is in heaven," indicates that His outlook was one of Faith and Hope. This optimism is supported by a saying attributed to Him in the Fourth Gospel:

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." (xii; 32.)

If the *nature* of the Kingdom and the *method* of its coming were disappointing to contemporary Judaism, so also was the *membership* of the Kingdom. The membership was definitely non-nationalist. In it no national distinctions were recognised. This is echoed in St. Paul's words:

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian."  
(Col. iii; 11.)

"They shall come," said Jesus, "from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south," and shall recline with the Jewish patriarchs and prophets in the Kingdom of God. (Lk. xiii; 29.)

All are admitted who long for the righteousness of the Kingdom, those blessed ones of the Sermon on the Mount—the holy and humble men of heart, the penitent, those who hunger and thirst after the righteousness of the Kingdom, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peace-makers, those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

For Jesus, the Kingdom is not a monarchical state but a divine family; its head is a father; its subjects are sons; its laws are moral and spiritual principles and relationships; its supreme virtue is love. This is expressed in its Two Great Commandments:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy

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heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

These two commandments Jesus derived from Judaism but He expanded and deepened them in His application of them. "The Lord thy God" is not only the God of Israel but the Father of mankind, and "thy neighbour" is not only thy fellow-Israelite but, as the Parable of the Good Samaritan teaches, any fellow-human being in need of help and comfort.

In the Religion of Jesus, the duty of love to God comes first in every sphere of human personality; spiritual, moral and mental. Love of one's neighbour comes second, and its quality and character are of the same kind as that given to God. The love is essentially spiritual, moral and mental. It is love as a motive, not as an emotion, and is directed to the true welfare of the person beloved. In the Religion of Jesus self-love is justified, but it must be of the same quality as the love given to one's neighbour. It must be directed to the true welfare of self, which can only be realised in the self's right relation to God and neighbour.

He who seeks to save his life for his own sole possession and not for the service of God and man will assuredly lose it.

This stress by Jesus on love (*agapē*), divine and human, as the supreme virtue of the religion of the Kingdom, and inwardness as essential to its right practice, develops a new ideal of righteousness; the righteousness of the Kingdom. It is not a righteousness secured by legal obedience to regulations, nor, on the other hand, is it an imputed righteousness

secured by faith in the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world. It is a righteousness realised by whole-hearted loyalty to the moral and spiritual relationships and principles enshrined in the Gospel of the Kingdom and Jesus insists that loyalty to this higher righteousness must come first, and all other loyalties must be subordinated to it. If the choice has to be made a man must sacrifice all except that. But this loyalty will not necessarily demand either Franciscan poverty or a martyr's death.

"Seek first," said Jesus, "the Kingdom of God and its righteousness and all things needful for this life shall be added unto you." (*Mt.* vi; 33. *Lk.* xii; 31.)

Contemporary Judaism inculcated the policy: Look after the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves. Jesus reversed it; Take care of the spiritual pounds and God will provide the temporal pence.

By their loyalty to the higher righteousness the sons of the Kingdom become the "salt of the earth" which preserves human society from corruption and decay and "the light of the world" which puts to flight moral darkness and dissipates false and debasing ideals.

The Religion of Jesus being supremely the religion of love, forgiveness plays a very important part in it. Forgiveness, to be moral can only rightly be granted to the forgivable. The two conditions of forgivableness are penitence and love. The utterance of the Prodigal, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son," and the declaration of Jesus, "Because she loved much, her sins, which are many, are forgiven

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her" illustrate this. The supreme test of forgiveableness is the willingness of the offender to forgive others. This in the Lord's Prayer is made the ground of the petition for divine forgiveness; "Forgive us, as we forgive others."

Jesus nowhere teaches that divine forgiveness is secured by the offering of propitiatory sacrifice.

Love is the sacrifice which God desires. Hence Jesus is recorded as citing the words of Hosea:

"I (i.e., God) desire loving kindness and not sacrifice." (*Hosea* vi; 6.)

Jesus in His attitude towards Israel's sacrificial system, took His stand with the great prophets ranging from Amos to Jeremiah.

"What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." (*Micah* vi; 8.)

The cleansing of the Court of the Gentiles by Jesus is usually interpreted as a protest against commercialism in religion. It is possible, however, that it was primarily directed against the sacrificial system of the Temple, and expressed the desire of Jesus to substitute in its place a purely spiritual and moral worship of God. (cf. *John* ii; 20. *Mk.* xiv; 58. *Acts* vi; 14.)

No account of the Gospel of the Kingdom would be adequate which omitted its teaching about prayer. At the request of His disciples Jesus gave them a prayer which may be called the Prayer of the Kingdom and its Creed also. In it He taught them in their praying to address God as Father.\* This was

\* It is a curious fact that the only prayer of the Twelve preserved in *Acts* makes the apostles address God as Master (Despot) and makes them speak of themselves as slaves.

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the practice of Jesus Himself in prayer. Prayer, as practised by Jesus was supremely the means of filial intercourse with the Divine Father—the exercise of direct access to the Divine Father by His children. The later church practice of pleading in prayer the merits of Jesus as a reason for being heard by God is not sanctioned by Jesus.\* When Jesus in the Fourth Gospel speaks of prayer “in my name,” He means prayer in accordance with His teaching and example.

Prayer has also in the Religion of Jesus a social-human aspect and so in the Lord’s Prayer He teaches His disciples to say “us,” not “me”; “our,” not “my.” Prayer, in the Religion of Jesus, not only knits man to God but also man to man. As Tennyson wrote:

“What are men better than sheep and goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If knowing God they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them  
friend?

And so the whole round world is every way  
Knit by gold chains about the feet of God.”

In the Religion of Jesus prayer covers all human needs. But the spiritual needs of mankind (Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven) take precedence over the needs of the individual.

There is only one other feature of the Kingdom to

\* The saying attributed to Jesus in *Mark* and *Matthew*, but omitted by *Luke*, that the Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many is almost certainly not His but is an early Christian comment that Jesus by His supreme self-sacrifice fulfilled to the uttermost in His own Ministry the ideal of service which He taught to His disciples. The phrase “a ransom for many” is based on Isaiah liii; 10-12. (*Mk.* x; 45, *Mt.* xx; 28. *Lk.* omits).

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which I can refer here. In its membership its greatest are its servants :

“Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.” (*Mk.* x; 44. cf. *Lk.* xxii; 25)

“I am among you as one that serveth.”

This is symbolised by Jesus washing the feet of His apostles.

“Universal Service,” according to the Hindu Swami Avyaktananda, is in his judgment the supreme characteristic of the Christian Religion. Humble service is the truest expression of Christian love.

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto Me.”

is the final benediction pronounced in the parable of the sheep and the goats.

I am compelled to conclude my summary of the Religion of Jesus at this point conscious of how much I have had to omit, but convinced that I have included nothing for which there is not sound historical support, nor have I omitted anything that is essential.

What I have outlined is certainly a lay religion : it is a religion without a priestly caste, with no sacrificial system, with no sacred shrines, but this entails no loss of the sacred ; but its intensification and augmentation. All the sons of the Kingdom are sacred persons, they are the brothers of the Messiah and sons of God and all their duties are sacred rites.

This Religion of the Kingdom is as profound as it is simple, as spiritual as it is natural, as inspiring as it is practical, as universal as it is personal. It unites

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loyalty with freedom, love with duty, service with leadership and to all it offers the status of divine sonship and universal brotherhood in the human family of God.

Yet it failed even when preached and practised by Jesus Himself. The woes pronounced over Capernaum and the towns of Galilee and His lamentation over Jerusalem testify to His recognition of failure.

“How often would I have gathered thee as a bird gathereth her young ones under her wings but ye would not.”

The Gospel of the Kingdom failed because contemporary Jewish religion was too strong for it. The Gospel of the Kingdom required a religious *tabula rasa* if it was to win acceptance. That was what Jesus expressed when He said of the child

“Of such is the Kingdom of God.”

“He that doth not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child he shall by no means enter therein.”

The open mind, the absence of pre-conceptions and prejudices, the spirit of humility and of trust, the willingness to receive and obey, were what Jesus demanded for His Gospel of the Kingdom. It was what Francis Bacon demanded for his New Science. He wrote in his Latin apothegms :

“The Kingdom of science, like the Kingdom of Heaven is only entered in the person of a little child.”

The only class in Judaism who possessed the *tabula rasa* which Jesus demanded for the reception of His Gospel was the irreligious class : the people of the earth, “this people which knoweth not the law

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and is accursed," as the Pharisees called them. This class "the common people" heard Jesus gladly, but the nation as a whole rejected the Gospel of the Kingdom and its Sanhedrin condemned its Messiah to death.

Such is the irony of history, Pontius Pilate crucified as a revolutionary zealot the man who had declared that

"All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." (*Mt.* xxvi; 52.)

On the cross, Jesus, loyal to His Gospel, prayed for His murderers:

"Father forgive them for they know not what they do." (*Lk.* xxiii; 34.)

and having uttered a second prayer (also preserved by *Lk.*)\*

"Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit" (xxiii; 46) He expired.

At this point the factual history of the Religion of Jesus ends and the religion about Jesus begins; His Resurrection, Ascension, Session at the right hand

\* I regard *Luke's* account (source L) of the "words from the cross" as possessing better historical attestation than *Mark's* record followed by *Matthew*. *L's* account is attested by the account of the death of Stephen (*Acts* vii; 60) evidently modelled on that of Jesus and also by *1 Peter* ii; 21-23. The record was derived by Luke in all probability from those women spectators who beheld the crucifixion; His apostles having fled. The fact that "some of them who stood by" misinterpreted, according to *Mk.* xv; 34, 35 and *Mt.* xxvii; 46, 47 our Lord's utterance and supposed that he was calling on Elijah to come to his help indicates that the utterance was indistinct. The Apostolic Church, unable to accept the cry from the Cross as being an appeal to Elijah interpreted it as a fulfilment by Jesus of an Old Testament oracle recorded in the opening words of Psalm xlii. The authors of the Third and Fourth Gospels by their omission of these words from their Passion narratives indicate that they rejected the Markan and Matthean interpretation of this cry from the Cross.



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of God, and the expectation of His imminent return to judge mankind.

This religion about Jesus, in forms of thought moulded and inspired by Old Testament oracles and apostolic psychic experience, expresses the faith and hope of those who "had been with Jesus" (*Acts* iv; 13) and believed "that He was come from God and went to God." (*Jn.* xiii; 3.)

It is not history, for what happens in the soul of man is not strictly speaking history, although its influence on the course of human history has been incalculable.

Many may feel that the Gospel of Jesus is basically inadequate because it contains no arguments for the existence of God and therefore it does not provide at the outset an adequate basis for religious faith. I once said to Dean Rashdall: "Surely the most important question for religion is: Does God exist?" He replied: "No. The most important question for religion is: What is God like?" That is the question the Gospel of Jesus answers.

There is no logically demonstrable proof of God's existence, although Roman Catholic theologians maintain that there is. The proof of the divine existence is secured, not by logic but by life. It is provided by experience. As Dr. Illingworth wrote:

"The Christian Religion refuses to be proved first and practised afterwards; its practice and its proof go hand in hand."\*

Dean Inge has summed this up in his epigram: The Christian life begins with an experiment and ends in an experience.

\*cf. Bacon's *Essays Of Asb alism*.

## Lecture Four

# PROSPECTS AND PREDICTIONS

*Our theology has been cast in a scholastic mode, i.e., all based on logic. We are in need of, and we are being gradually forced into, a theology based on psychology. The transition, I fear, will not be without much pain : but nothing can prevent it.*

ARCHBISHOP FREDERICK TEMPLE

*Christianity will be content with a simpler symbol, because it will have learnt Christ. It will not need any longer Trent or Westminster, Lambeth or the Vatican to lead it. It will be satisfied with simpler thoughts and a purer faith.*

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER

*Sooner or later we must come to outlive the theology of the nursery. Are we doing anything to fill its place ?*

HASTINGS RASHDALL

*There is nothing so dangerous as the desire to make everything right and tight . . . I find that my faith suffers nothing by leaving a thousand questions open, so long as I am convinced on two or three main lines.*

BISHOP LIGHTFOOT



## PROSPECTS AND PREDICTIONS

IN MY THIRD LECTURE I gave an outline of the Religion of Jesus as it is enshrined in His Good News of the Kingdom of God. I can conceive of no better religion for the religious unification and moral and spiritual progress of mankind.

It cannot be surpassed as a discipline for the moral and spiritual culture of the human personality. Neither can it be surpassed as a factor in securing social unity, happiness and welfare of the community which seeks to realise this Christian ideal. Like Bishop Butler's State founded upon Virtue, it is assured of ultimate success.

Had I been treating this theme some years ago, I should have felt it needful at this point to defend the Religion of Jesus against the charge of Nietzsche that its morality is a slave morality, and not the morality of free men and of brave men. The devastating influence of Nietzsche's ethic on the German character and conduct in its support of Hitlerism, confutes in most decisive manner Nietzsche's charges against the ethic of Jesus. A community can be united by a totalitarian tyranny in which fear constitutes the unifying cement, or it can be united by a spirit of love and loyalty in which the selfishness, self-assertion, and self-indulgence of the individual

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are replaced by the spirit of modesty, gentleness, patience, and self-sacrifice which constitute the strongest of unifying forces. Such a social discipline is essentially exercised from within, not by an external authority. And the brave and the free need it as "the girdle of manliness."

Yet Nietzsche recognised that the Christian ethic possessed a value for others although not for Germans. He wrote:

"It is characteristic of such an unphilosophical race as the English to hold on firmly to Christianity; they *need* its discipline for moralising and humanising."

Many critics of the Religion of Jesus will regard Freud's attack upon religion as deserving of more serious attention today than the attacks made by Nietzsche. Freud's attack is notably presented in his volume, *The Future of an Illusion* (published 1928). Our leading English psychotherapist, Dr. William Brown, in his latest book, *Personality and Religion* (published in 1946) thus summarises and confutes Freud's conception of religion.

"Sigmund Frëud has said that religion itself is an illusion. In one of the best-known of his books, *The Future of an Illusion*, he endeavours to show that religious belief is an illusion (not a delusion), the disguised fulfilment of a wish for security and mental comfort and rest, based upon the infantile part of our nature. I would dissociate myself completely from him there. On the basis of one's philosophical training and one's own individual experience of analysing persons and analysing

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oneself, one can say that this book, though clever, merely sets up a man of straw to knock him down again." (p. 35 f.)

Dr. William Brown's own positive conviction about religion is thus set forth in the same volume.

"I have become more convinced than ever that religion is the most important thing in life and that it is essential to mental health." (p. 134.)

C. G. Jung, the most brilliant of Freud's pupils, in his readable volume *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (published in 1933) is in definite agreement with Dr. William Brown on this issue. His verdict is worth citing:

"I should like to call attention to the following facts. During the past thirty years, people from all the civilised countries of the earth have consulted me . . . Among all my patients in the second half of life—that is to say, over 35—there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that everyone of them felt ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook. This of course has nothing to do with a particular creed or membership of a church." (p. 264, fifth edition, 1936.)

But far more detrimental to the influence of the Religion of Jesus in our civilisation is the popular but deep-seated conviction that however theoretically attractive the Religion of Jesus may be it is incapable of being practised. This is true if it means

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that the Religion of Jesus will always present a moral and spiritual ideal which is beyond our power to practise perfectly. Jesus Himself recognised this. He said to His disciples :

“When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.” (*Lk.* xvii; 10.)

But this failure to attain perfection is no sound reason against striving to advance as far as we can on the road to perfection for every stage in that advance is well worth while individually and socially.

It is sometimes charged against the Religion of Jesus that it is pacifist and that pacifism is detrimental to human welfare. It is not clear that Jesus was a pacifist in the modern sense of that term. All we know is that He was against the militarist revolutionary projects of the Zealots and that He commended the use of peaceful as against violent methods and that He pronounced a Beatitude on the peacemakers, not simply on the lovers of peace, but on the makers of peace, declaring them to be the children of God.

The charge against the impractical idealism of the Religion of Jesus really means that the objector is not prepared to make the moral and spiritual experiment :

“The religion of Jesus has not been tried and been found wanting : it has been found hard and therefore has not been tried.”

If civilisation be “the humanisation of man in society” and if religion be “the inner side of civilisation” then the Religion of Jesus can certainly give, in co-operation with modern science, that civilisation which the world so urgently needs today.

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The practical problem is how is the world to be won to make this religion its own. To begin with this religion must win acceptance from two influential classes who are at present sharply separated from each other in our Western civilisation. These are the Scientific Humanists and the Dogmatic Traditionalists. If they cannot be won to accept the Religion of Jesus enshrined in His Gospel of the Kingdom of God as *basic* for their spiritual and moral life the prospects of the survival of our Western civilisation are small indeed.

Another condition demanded for success is that the Nordic races must at the outset be converted to acceptance. If the British Commonwealth of Nations and the United States of America, in so far as they consist of these Nordic races, cannot be won to give their support at the outset, success seems impossible since they are the most influential races in our modern civilisation. And if they refuse to lead, there is none to take their place.

There are many defects and weaknesses in our Nordic Western Civilisation, but it is potentially and essentially more loyal to the Religion of the Kingdom of God than it realises. Its social democracy has been inspired by the Religion of Jesus: as also its expression of it in the Atlantic Charter. The slogan of the French Revolution, *Liberté Fraternité Egalité*, is essentially Christian. The epitaph on Tom Paine, "the Atheist": "The world is my home; mankind are my friends; to do good is my religion," might have won from Jesus the comment: "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

It may be objected that this is all very vague and



hazy. No doubt. Nevertheless, our Nordic civilisation, where it is moved at all by religious ideals, will be found to believe in the Divine Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of man and the spiritual and moral leadership of Jesus Christ.

If Tertullian in the second century could affirm that the human soul is naturally Christian :

*Anima humana naturaliter christiana*

I think we can today affirm with no less conviction that the spirit of our Western Nordic civilisation is essentially and potentially Christian. It needs most certainly to make enormous advances in its spiritual and moral development. It needs also in many cases to be consciously converted to the Religion of Jesus. But it is certainly not hostile.

I turn now to the scientific humanists who are often spoken of as the most dangerous opponents of the Christian Religion, because they give their support to the Christian ethic, but reject the Christian theology. I do not, however, think it fair to call them the enemies of the Christian Religion. They are hostile to a number of Christian dogmas and Christian practices, but I believe the attitude of their greatest men is profoundly sympathetic. If they are not inside the Christian Communion the Christian church might well ask in a spirit of Christian humility why this *is so* and whether it is not possible to remedy it.

I give here examples from the recent utterances of two eminent English humanists indicating how they see the contemporary religious situation. My first is from the Presidential address delivered to the British Association by Sir Richard Gregory, F.R.S., on July

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20th, 1946. The address is entitled *Civilisation and the Pursuit of Knowledge*. In it Sir Richard Gregory records the following impressive affirmations :

“Religious experience can claim to be positive knowledge just as much as facts which appeal to the physical senses can be said to represent ultimate reality. As factors which have influenced human development throughout all stages of civilisation, religion and science are inseparable; but it cannot be said that the two systems of thought have the same rates of rational advance, whether in principles or practice. Each is concerned with the pursuit of truth, whether for its own sake or for increasing the contacts of human life with things and forces, visible and invisible, in the heavens and on the earth.” (p. 4.)

“What is wanted today more than at any other epoch of civilisation, because of the powers which have been placed at the disposal of civilised peoples, is the strengthening of the human heart everywhere to act upon the principles of brotherly kindness contained in the maxim common to all religions and ethical systems : do not unto others what you would not they should do unto you.” (p. 11.)

“No one believes that improvements of material conditions can be made a measure of ethical goodness.” (p. 12.)

“There is now, as always, freedom of choice between good and evil fruits of knowledge; and the ways in which these are cultivated or controlled will be the reply to the menace now facing civilised peoples. All who have goodness in their hearts

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and goodwill towards their fellows should unite in meeting this challenge to movement onwards and upward." (p. 12.)

My second citation is not the utterance of a physical scientist but of a great classical scholar and European statesman: Professor Gilbert Murray. It is taken from his recent Conway Lecture entitled: *Myths and Ethics, or Humanism and the World's Need*.

"I am not a Christian. In a broad sense we are, I think, in agreement about the precious quality of Christian civilisation; . . . in practice that agreement carries us pretty far . . . But that is by no means all. . . . The society and the Churches that are historically Christian are at heart not so. The saints would condemn them. In such cases we and the real Christians find ourselves together. . . . Where, then, does the difference come? Simply in the reasons which we give for believing that this faith is right, that the actions to which it points are what we call "good." It is the myth that divides us; and it divides us only when people take phrases that are originally and essentially metaphorical and insist on turning them into dogmas. . . . Plato, at the end of many of his discussions, comes up against some doubt he cannot resolve, some mystery he cannot penetrate, and regularly falls back on a myth or allegory which, if it cannot say what the hidden truth really is, can at least suggest 'by images or metaphors' what it is like. . . . Whenever we attempt in human language to make dogmatic scientific statements about the great Mystery we degrade it much as the Fundamentalists, with their literal

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interpretations, degrade the magnificence of the ancient Hebrew literature.

"Is this attitude too remote and exotic for the plain man? I think not. It is very close to that of the famous Broad Churchmen of my youth, such as Jowett and F. D. Maurice, and to that of the Modernists. . . . It is, I suspect, practically, though unconsciously, approved by the average intelligent layman, at any rate in Protestant countries.

"The dogmatists speak without knowledge; unfortunately, as history shows us, they too often make up for their lack of knowledge by the fanatical passion of their belief. In a world already tortured by fanatics of Left and Right, fanatics of Fascism and Communism, fanatics who have faith in nothing but the promptings of their own passions, it is surely an awful thing for men of good will to reintroduce a religious fanaticism which we once hoped was passing away in peace. . . . We, who believe above all things in Humanity and Truth, and those Christians whose religion rests far more upon, say, the Sermon on the Mount and the thirteenth chapter of *Corinthians* than on dogmas and miracles and magic claims, have exactly the same conception of our duty to mankind, the same vision of beauty to be pursued: and those, I venture to think, will pursue it best who, in the prophet's words, "Walk humbly with their God" and do not profess to know what is beyond man's knowledge." (p. 28.)

It is immensely important that the chasm between men of this kind and the Christian Church should be

bridged, and the bridge is the Religion of Jesus as set forth in His Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

The other class that needs to be won to accept the Gospel of the Kingdom as the essence of the Christian Religion is our ecclesiastical and dogmatic traditionalists, the representatives of the great organised Christian Churches. Traditionalist Christianity is far from secure: its walls are exhibiting alarming cracks; there are signs that the dogmatic foundations are giving way, and structural collapse may be imminent. I have no desire to stress this. I only wish to see the preventive remedies applied. Evolution is far better than revolution. The only sound defence against schism and desertion is a spirit of concession and a policy of comprehensiveness, and the wisdom which puts first things first. No Christian would maintain that it is possible to be more orthodox than Jesus Christ.

Large concessions to the Humanists could be made by the Traditionalists without detriment to the orthodox foundations of the Christian Religion. I cannot conceive any educated traditionalist seriously maintaining that it is either possible or indeed needful to be more orthodox than Jesus Christ.

Take the much-vexed question of the miraculous which separates the Humanists from the Traditionalists. Whether certain alleged happenings recorded in the Gospels are historical or unhistorical, and whether they are to be interpreted as miracles or not, are really academic questions and the final verdict on them, if ever given, must be given by the historians and by the scientists. The religious issue is what is the moral and spiritual value of the miraculous in the

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Religion of Jesus. For Jesus, I believe the historical evidence is conclusive, that the miraculous had no worth whatsoever and that to appeal to the miraculous as evidence in support of moral and spiritual truth was religious apostasy. Here Jesus is on the side of the Humanists as against the Traditionalists. Such an amazing utterance as

“An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign but there shall no sign be given unto it”

is not only in flat opposition to the beliefs of the religious world of His day, but is also in opposition to the Christian Traditionalism of the last nineteen hundred years.

Equally, Jesus is in flat opposition to the belief that the Creator uses the forces of nature as a nemesis for the punishment of human sin or as a reward for human virtue. Jesus said:

“Think you that the eighteen upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell were sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you nay.”

“He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (*Mt.* v; 45.)

Plainly Jesus was no believer in “Acts of God” by which nature was directed to the punishment of wickedness and the reward of piety. Here He and the scientific Humanists stand side by side against religious traditionalism.

In view of this, could there really be any betrayal of orthodox Christian faith if the Traditionalists were to concede to the Scientific Humanists that all those portions of the Traditional Christian Creed which

affirm miraculous happenings and irruptive acts of God into the Natural Order are not to be required as articles of faith which must be affirmed by those who would enjoy full communion in the Christian Church?

The Traditionalist will reply—this means the surrender of the miraculous Birth, the miraculous Resurrection, the miraculous Ascension, and the miraculous Return of Jesus as Judge of Mankind at the conclusion of Human History. We would point out that we are not requiring the Traditionalist to surrender *his* belief in these dogmas. What we are asking is that the Scientific Humanist should not be required to affirm them as a condition of full membership in the Christian Church.

There are a number of other traditional dogmas which critical research leads us to conclude were no part of the religion of Jesus, as for instance—the *offering of expiatory sacrifice as a means of securing* divine forgiveness and the dogma of the inherited guilt of infants due to Original Sin. We should claim the same freedom for the Scientific Humanist in regard to these dogmas also. Is the Traditionalist prepared to make such concessions? We would urge him seriously to consider this. None of these concessions we have in mind would sacrifice the three essentials of Christian orthodoxy—faith in the One Divine Creative Father, faith that we have the spiritual and moral nature of the Divine Father enshrined for mankind in the personality and Gospel of the Jesus of History: faith that by divine communion those who seek it are enabled to receive spiritual and moral strength and guidance to enable them to learn and carry out the Divine Will.

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It is these which are the central affirmations of the Religion of Jesus in His Gospel of the Kingdom of God. If our Traditionalists are willing to make such concessions to the Scientific Humanists, cannot the Scientific Humanists see their way to make concessions on their side for the sake of securing a unified Christian civilisation? Would they not be prepared to make the Religion of Jesus as enshrined in the spiritual and moral relationships and principles of His Gospel of the Kingdom of God the working hypotheses of their own spiritual life?

Professor Gilbert Murray declares : "It is the myth that divides." But surely no acceptance of myth is demanded from Scientific Humanists in pleading with them to make this concession. By this means the Gospel of the Kingdom of God could become the Gospel of Reconciliation between Christian Traditionalists and Scientific Humanists. Of course it would be no easy matter to implement this proposal. But a way has already been pointed towards its achievement.

The Church of England made a great step forward when the Archbishops of Canterbury and York appointed a Doctrinal Commission to report on Christian Doctrine within the Anglican Communion and for this purpose included in the membership of that Commission not only Catholic Churchmen and Evangelical Churchmen but also Liberal and Modernist Churchmen.

*The Report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine* (published in 1938 by the S.P.C.K.) has enlarged doctrinal freedom within the Anglican Communion. The Doctrinal Report has made it permissible for



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English churchmen to hold and to teach the Christian Faith in accordance with assured results of modern scientific, historical and literary criticism which until the date of the issue of that Report was regarded as unauthorised and illegitimate.

Has not the time now come for the authorities of our Christian churches to appoint a second commission on Christian doctrine, including in its membership a number of eminent humanists—anthropocentric and theocentric—in order to explore in what way the Christian Religion could be so formulated and organised as to enable humanists and traditionalist Christians to co-operate as members of one great fellowship, inspired by the moral and spiritual ideals of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God?

The results of such a second commission might bridge the chasm which separates the great mass of humanists from the Christian Church as it now is, and secure for our modern civilisation a synthesis on the highest level of the forces of religion and science.

Can it be maintained that (after a hundred years of intense scientific, historical, and literary criticism as it bears upon Christian faith) there is not a real need for the reformulation of that faith in accordance with modern thought and knowledge?

Whilst pleading with the authorities of the Christian Church to return for its essentials to the pattern of the Kingdom of God, I am not advocating that "to return" is the whole task of the Christian Church in the sphere of Christian doctrine. The principles and ideals of the Kingdom of God are capable of infinite development and renewed application in each succeeding age of human history. And

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there is particular need of this development and application today in our modern civilisation. The greatest of the Church's theologians, and one who would seem to surpass all others in his understanding of the essentials of the Religion of Jesus, cites Him as saying to His apostles:

"I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now: when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come he will guide you into all the truth." (*Jn. xvi; 12 f.*)

Here we have foreshadowed an evolutionary religion which, beginning with the essential relationships and principles of the Religion of Jesus, is developed under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit of truth, love and freedom in order to meet the spiritual and moral needs of man in each successive age.

This spiritual and moral evolution, originating with Jesus, is characterised by divine creative energy, a true line of moral and spiritual development, and the power of infinite ascent so long as its true line of evolution is loyally adhered to. Whenever this true line of ascent is lost or the Christian Church lacks courage to pursue it, a *cul de sac* is entered and decrepitude and decay inevitably ensue.

"By the light of burning martyrs,  
Christ, thy bleeding feet we track,  
Toiling up new Calvaries ever  
With the cross that turns not back.  
New occasions teach new duties;  
Time makes ancient good uncouth;  
They must upward still and onward  
Who would keep abreast of truth."

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So wrote James Russell Lowell, poet and American ambassador.

Is this all sentimental idealism or is it a prophetic picture of human history yet to be fulfilled?

In a recent erudite and able study of the Christian Religion entitled *Jésus Christ et le Christianisme* by Piero Martinetti, published in Paris in 1942, the author discusses the prospects of the Religion of Jesus in its primal and spiritual form becoming the religion of mankind. He asks :

1. Whether it is possible that the familiar pattern of historical Christianity (dogmatic and ecclesiastical) will change in the future?
2. Whether the Christian Religion will triumph in the world?
3. Whether the Kingdom of God will come in human history?

He answers all three questions in the negative. The reasons for his conclusions demand examination.

1. To take his first conclusion, that the familiar pattern of historical Christianity (dogmatic and ecclesiastical) will not change.

If we are to judge by what has happened during the last hundred years in the Anglican Communion the evidence points in the opposite direction. A century ago that Christian Church was Fundamentalist in its doctrine of Holy Scripture. Dean Burgon's eloquent affirmation had, when he made it, the great body of the clergy and laity of the English Church behind it.

"The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that 'sitteth upon the Throne.' Every book of it,

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every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more and some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him who sitteth upon the Throne, faultless, unerring, supreme."

Yet, only a very small percentage and they the most ignorant of the members of that church would dare to make such an affirmation today.

Take the doctrine of the physical resurrection of human bodies at the Day of Judgment. This "Resurrection of the Flesh" is generally disbelieved by educated Anglicans today and this disbelief is not regarded as heretical.

Again, the belief in the Everlasting Torment of the wicked in Hell is now rejected. When less than a century ago F. D. Maurice denied this because he declared, that such a doctrine was incompatible with faith in the love of God, he was deprived of his professorship in King's College, London.

Again, the omnipotence and omniscience of the historic Jesus which was taken for granted a hundred years ago has, since the publication of *Lux Mundi*, ceased to be the belief of an increasing number of educated English Churchmen.

Again, the Second Advent of Jesus attended by Angels and Archangels to inaugurate a universal assize of the human race—a belief which has dominated Christian expectation from the days of the New Testament until recent times, is now being exchanged by many Christians for the advance of

the Kingdom of God in human history, and the separation of good from evil in each human soul.

Again, the Fall of man, brought about by the sin of the first parents of mankind, and the doctrine of the consequent hereditary guilt of the human race which demanded as its remedy the expiatory sacrifice of the Son of God, has been exchanged for the doctrine of man's possession of an animal nature derived from his brute ancestry, and the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice by which the good, by their sufferings in the cause of righteousness, achieve the salvation of their fellow-men, exemplified supremely by the Passion of Jesus Christ.

In these cases, and there are a number of others which might be cited, it is clear that in the Anglican Communion and in sister churches also the traditional dogmatic pattern of Christianity has undergone great changes during the last century, and (in view of the pressure exerted by the forces of literary, historical and scientific criticism) the process is not at all likely to cease. Should it cease, the Christian Religion would become extinct in every modern-minded community.

The whole traditional dogmatic scheme of salvation is in a state of dissolution, and is being replaced by a new pattern of Christian doctrine more in harmony with our growing knowledge and our deepening and widening moral and spiritual experience.

No doubt there is far less alteration in countries where Roman Catholicism prevails, because in those countries no open dogmatic and ecclesiastical readjustment is possible, since no open criticism of

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traditional doctrine is permitted within the Papal Church. But what has happened in the British Commonwealth of Nations and in the U.S.A. is, we believe, more truly prophetic of the course that humanity, as a whole, will follow, than what has occurred in the Mediterranean lands and in Central and South America. Of course, we can hardly expect M. Martinetti to recognise the force of this argument.

2. M. Martinetti's second conclusion, that the Christian Religion can never be the religion of mankind, is equally open to confutation at the bar of modern history. The present-day advance of Christian foreign missions weakens greatly the force of his conclusion. If M. Martinetti's first conclusion, that the traditional dogmatic pattern of Christianity cannot be changed, were sound, then there would have been strong support for his second conclusion that the Christian Religion can never be the religion of mankind. But with the promise which modern Christianity gives of its powers of evolution and adaptation M. Martinetti's second conclusion is deprived of convincing authority.

3. The third conclusion of M. Martinetti that the Kingdom of God will never come on earth but will simply be the possession of a few recluses is, we believe, equally wide of the mark. When the intellectual and moral leaders of mankind recognise that the supreme remedy for political and social ills is the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, that Kingdom will come with power.

In thinking of the future of mankind in relation to the Kingdom of God we need to recognise first that

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the Christian Religion is very young although Christians persist in thinking of it as very old.

Secondly, that the mental, moral and spiritual advance made by the human race since the days of palæolithic man, notwithstanding checks and disasters, gives good hope that the Kingdom of God may yet be realised in a world-wide civilisation.

These conclusions may be those of "wishful-thinking woolly-bags," but on the other hand, they may be the conclusions of sound far-sighted optimism.

The following citation from Dr. Glasson's *Second Advent*\* supports the latter alternative as essentially Christian.

"Clement of Alexandria struck the authentic Christian note when he said that Jesus turned sunset into sunrise. The Gospel came with a message of hope to a decaying world and assured men that the Dayspring from on high had visited them.

"It is sometimes said that belief in progress is a modern post-Darwinian idea; but the following quotation is not taken from the *Origin of Species*, but from Origen, the Christian Father:

"If, as Celsus says, all did as I do, then the barbarians also would receive the Divine Word and become the most moral and gentle of men. All other religions would cease from the earth and Christianity alone would be supreme, which indeed is destined one day to have the supremacy since the divine truth is continually bringing more

\* By T. F. Glasson (The Epworth Press, 1945).

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souls under its sway (*contra Celsum*, viii; 68).” (p. 232.)

In my first lecture I referred to the educational systems of civilisation as important factors in the evolution and survival quality of civilisation. In concluding my fourth lecture, I wish to direct attention to our own religious education in relation to our Western civilisation.

Ideals, however sound, depend for their fulfilment in this world upon the methods employed to realise them. The most effective method today of advancing the Kingdom of God in our modern civilisation is by national religious education.

Of course, each religious denomination in the nation can be of use in this undertaking, but it is perfectly clear that an increasing number of our population have withdrawn from practising membership in these religious denominations and are almost entirely uninfluenced by their endeavours. However active these denominations may be they are too restricted in their intellectual equipment, material resources, and range of influence to carry out the work of national religious education effectively. Hence it must be done by the nation.

National religious education is of two kinds: that given in the Universities and their colleges, and that given in the schools of every grade.

In our universities religion, if taught at all, is taught scientifically in its various branches—Comparative Religion, History of Religion, Psychology of Religion and Philosophy of Religion. This applies also to all Biblical studies pursued in the universities.



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It is strictly intellectual and is intended to give the student the fullest possible understanding of religion.

Actually it is not teaching religion but instruction about religion, yet it can be of great use in the teaching of religion; not only because it should give the teacher of religion an intellectual mastery of his subject, but also because it will enable him to understand the reactions of the modern intellectual world to religion, and not least to the many problems it presents to the modern mind. It should enable the teacher so equipped to distinguish between the lower and the higher, the transitory and the permanent, the detrimental and the beneficial in religion, and so prevent him from teaching in the name of religion much which modern scientific knowledge has proved to be untrue, and which therefore the pupil will have to unlearn later on. It is highly desirable that as many as possible of those teaching religion in the schools of the nation should have received this university equipment.

I turn now to the second kind of national religious education—the teaching of religion in the schools. This ought to be teaching religion itself. This is not intended to provide primarily an intellectual equipment, but a spiritual and moral equipment which will exert the strongest influence on the pupils' character, conduct, manners, taste, habits and spirit.

In a Christian country the basis of this religious teaching must be essentially Christian, and by that I mean the Kingdom of God as enshrined in the mission and message of the Jesus of history. It should begin with Jesus, not with Genesis. The Old Testament should be used only for explaining the

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Religion in which Jesus was brought up, and which was the Religion of those who crucified Him. What Thomas Carlyle called "Hebrew old clothes," and what another\* has called "the Huppim and Muppim" method of teaching the Christian Religion in the schools ought to be abandoned.

A new stage of religious evolution was inaugurated by the Mission and Message of Jesus. The religious education of the child ought to begin with that new world order of the Kingdom of God. Of course it cannot be otherwise than non-sectarian; and only competence and the desire to give such religious teaching ought to be required from the teacher. In our latest educational reforms, religious tests are rightly discarded, but I am not sure that there are not dangers in *agreed* syllabuses of religious education. The system must be non-sectarian if it is to be effective nationally, and the educated lay mind must have control of the methods employed. To give such education in religion is in my own experience infinitely harder than giving academic instruction about religion.

I venture to name six qualities which education in religion ought to possess.

1. First, it must be *popular*. It must begin as the great T. H. Huxley began, by assuming that his audience knew nothing whatsoever about the subject. It must seek to avoid all technicalities and cant phrases. Our religious teaching is overloaded with technical terms—Incarnation, Regeneration, Propitiation, Predestination, Election, Atonement,

\* *Huppim and Muppim*. A few words upon the sore need of Religious Education. By Charles L. Marson.

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Redemption, Inspiration, Revelation, Salvation. Their use ought to be avoided except to explain in simple and sincere language the truths they stand for. *Verba sesquipedalia* are the foes, not the friends, of religious education. The best sermon I ever heard on the Atonement did not use the word Atonement. The preacher told three stories shewing how undeserved forgiveness, heroic self-sacrifice and inspiring companionship could restore the guilty and reform the degraded.

Of course teaching about unseen spiritual realities cannot avoid being metaphorical or symbolical. Anthropomorphic terms must be used but they must be explained. When used of God they stress the truth that He is personal; that is to say that we can enter into personal relations with Him and He with us—He is a Father because He loves us better even than the best of human fathers. Jesus is the Son of God because we see in Jesus—His character and teaching—the real nature of God under human limitations; “like Father like son,” and Jesus is the eldest of many brothers.

2. Next, the teaching of religion must be *practical*. It is given in order to secure practical results from those who are taught, and these practical results are seen in the influence which the teaching produces on their conduct and character; their behaviour towards one another, their self-respect, their sense of responsibility for the tone of the school and the welfare of their school-fellows. This was Christ’s test: “By their fruits ye shall know them.”

3. Thirdly, the teaching of religion must be *prophetic*. The teacher must point his pupils to a

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higher authority than his own, an authority to which both they and he owe obedience; "Thus saith the Lord." In the presence of that authority popular standards, conventions, practices and prejudices, count for nothing. Those who heard God's call, to which their contemporaries were deaf or indifferent, and by obeying it became the salt of the earth and the light of the world are the milestones on the road of human progress. Varied examples should be cited from history and biography—not simply from the lives of sages, saints, and martyrs, but in the spheres of adventure, leadership, scientific intuition, literary inspiration and social-political reforms.

4. Fourthly, the teaching of religion should be *psychological*. The pupil must be taught to realise the wonder of his own personality. Augustine complained in his *Confessions* that men travel abroad to view the wonders of nature, yet pass themselves, "the crowning wonder by." It was Memory which seemed to him most wonderful in whose great hall he not only met himself with all his past experiences, but also himself with all his hopes and plans for the coming years. But not less wonderful than Memory is Conscience, the moral sense, and the way it works—above all its authority—the voice of God in the human soul.

The pupil should be urged to verify this psychological teaching in his own experience. And it is under this heading that I should class prayer; its theory and practice.

5. Fifthly, the teaching of religion ought to be *poetic*. By poetic I mean the use of the imagination in

religious teaching. Imagination in alliance with the sense of wonder. Horace refers with contempt to the *nil admirari* type of person. The poetic teaching of religion should inspire sensitiveness to the wonderful in the Universe. I do not refer to the miraculous and the looking for God through the chinks in His Universe, but to our experience of that Universe as a whole. This sense of wonder in the pupil should be developed by teaching him to appreciate the beautiful and to cultivate his sense of it. Christian art is an expression of this poetic quality of the Christian Religion—in poetry, in music, in architecture, in sculpture, in painting, but supremely in the finest appreciation of spiritual and moral beauty.

May I give two illustrations of this? The saintly Fénelon, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cambrai, finding a cow going astray brought it back to its owner, a Huguenot peasant woman. In the conversation which followed, Fénelon asked her, "Where was your religion before Calvin?" She replied, "Monseigneur, in hearts such as yours."

What amazing spiritual sensitiveness is expressed in John Huss' exclamation: *Sancta simplicitas!* when a pious old woman laid her little faggot at the martyr's feet for his burning.

It is in its poetic quality that "the genius of Christianity" (to use Chateaubriand's great phrase) is most attractively presented to cultivated and sensitive natures. Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* stresses this.

6. Last but not least, the teaching of religion in schools must be sustained and directed by the

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teacher's sense of pastoral responsibility for the moral and spiritual development of his pupil especially in the formation of right habits and the checking of evil habits.

Of the many sermons I heard in my youth I can only recall one. It was on habits.

Far too little is taught about the effect of forming good habits or bad habits of thought.

"The soul is dyed the colour of its leisure thoughts."

Sow a thought and you reap an act ;  
Sow an act and you reap a habit ;  
Sow a habit and you reap a character ;  
Sow a character and you reap a destiny."

Evil thoughts cannot be expelled simply by trying to suppress them. They must be replaced by good thoughts.

It is only the expulsive power of a new affection which can operate effectively.

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report . . . think on these things." (*Phil.* iv ; 8.)

Really influential religious teaching demands that the teacher should become the friend of his pupils ; for religion has to be caught as well as taught.

'The teaching of religion in the schools of the nation needs, in every grade of school, men and women teachers who are the spiritual successors of that new type of public schoolmaster created by the inspired religious genius of Dr. Arnold, celebrated by his son in his poem "Rugby Chapel."

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“Ye, like angels, appear,  
Radiant with ardour divine.  
Languor is not in your heart,  
Weakness is not in your word,  
Weariness not on your brow . . .  
On, to the bound of the waste,  
On, to the City of God!”

Such a system of religious education in our schools, striving on the one hand to be absolutely loyal to the Science of Religion as taught in our universities and, on the other hand, absolutely loyal to the essentials of the Kingdom of God as taught by Jesus, would do much to provide our modern civilisation with the spiritual and moral force it so greatly needs and would also enable our sectarian churches to re-unite on the basis of Christian essentials, and so recover the spiritual and moral influence which they have lost in many modern communities.

A mightier Church shall come, whose covenant  
word  
Shall be the deeds of Love. Not *credo* then,  
*Amo* shall be the password through her gates.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix I

#### *The Historical Sources for the Life of Jesus*

THE HISTORICAL SOURCES for the life of Jesus are restricted to the New Testament with the exception of a brief notice in the *Annals* of Tacitus, a few references in Justin Martyr, Origen and other early Fathers, and at the most some twenty-five genuine Sayings (*Agrapha*) drawn from a variety of Apostolic and post-Apostolic writings, e.g., the Oxyrhyncus papyri, the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* and an insertion on Sabbath-breaking in the *Codex Beza*.

Although the non-Gospel portions of the New Testament contain many references to Jesus and so confirm statements made in the Gospels, they add nothing to our knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus, with the exception of some dubious statements in *Acts* i.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are called Synoptic, because they all three view the Ministry of Jesus from the same angle, and in this respect differ from the Gospel of St. John, which Clement of Alexandria called "The Spiritual Gospel"



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*Mark* is the Gospel of the Church in Rome: *Luke*, written we know not where, was the Gospel of the Pauline Churches in Greece and Asia Minor. *Matthew* was the Gospel of the great Church of Antioch and no doubt contained Palestinian as well as Syrian traditions about Jesus and His Ministry. *John* is almost certainly Ephesian although some argue for Alexandria as its place of origin.

There is convincing evidence that St. Mark, son of Mary of Jerusalem, cousin of Barnabas, travelling companion of St. Paul on his first missionary journey, later the close associate of St. Peter, wrote the Second Gospel. According to a universal church tradition, this Gospel contains a Greek translation of the reminiscences of St. Peter delivered by him in Aramaic to congregations of Roman Christians. It was certainly composed before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Mark's Gospel was so highly valued that Matthew and Luke between them cite almost the whole of it in their Gospels. Moreover they follow its general order in the events they narrate, but where Matthew departs from that order, Luke adheres to it, and where Luke departs from Mark's order, Matthew adheres to it.

Besides using *Mark* as a common source, Matthew and Luke also make use of another common source of the Sayings of Jesus, designated *Q* (*Quelle*) by the critics. This *Q* source (there are many theories as to how much was contained in it) is usually regarded as considerably earlier than *Mark*, possibly as early as 45 A.D.

The Third Gospel was certainly written by Luke,

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the "Beloved Physician" who accompanied St. Paul on his voyage as a prisoner to Rome. It is later than 70 A.D. in its present form. According to the "Proto-Luke" theory of Streeter, Luke's Gospel may have existed in a briefer form earlier than St. Mark's Gospel. This briefer form began with Chapter iii; 1, and did not contain the Marcan sections in our present *Luke*.

The First Gospel (author unknown) is also later than 70 A.D.

Besides using *Mark* and *Q*, Matthew and Luke used other sources peculiar to each. These peculiar sources in *Matthew*, the critics designate *M*: these peculiar sources in *Luke*, the critics designate *L*. *L* contains material of great historical value, but *M*, historically, is of far less value.

Although the Fourth Gospel—the latest written of our Gospels—contains a very profound interpretation of the teaching of Jesus by one possessed of great spiritual insight, its worth as a historical narrative is much disputed.

It is important to recognise another source used by the authors of the four Gospels for their accounts of Jesus and His teaching, and that is the Old Testament. These Jewish Scriptures, the primitive apostles and disciples regarded as full of Divine oracles which had been fulfilled in the Mission of Jesus the Messiah whom the Jews expected but failed to recognise when He arrived. The influence exerted by these Old Testament oracles (or *Testimonia* as they are called) on the primitive records of the life and ministry of Jesus varies much. It is, for instance, much greater in *Matthew* than in *Mark* and where least was known

historically of the life of Jesus, there probably the influence of the *Testimonia* was greatest.

It must be remembered that the two great apologetic arguments used by the primitive Church to prove the Messiahship of Jesus were based on (1) His miracles, (2) His fulfilment of Old Testament predictions and that the influence of this apologetic has in some cases affected the Gospel narratives.

There are in existence a number of non-Canonical or Apocryphal Gospels—all later than the Synoptic Gospels. The comparison of these Apocryphal Gospels with the Synoptic Gospels impresses the student with the historical value of the latter.

It is probable that a number of Sayings in the Canonical Gospels have been attributed to Jesus which are not his. Some of these Sayings may have been derived from John the Baptist (several of whose disciples became the apostles of Jesus). Other Sayings are plainly those of Primitive Christian interpreters of the teaching of Jesus, e.g., some of the expositions of the parables: others are primitive church regulations, e.g., some of the rules prescribed for the missionary expeditions of the Twelve and the Seventy. In one case at least the contents of an early Christian document, known as the *Little Apocalypse*, have been attributed to Jesus. It is only critical comparative study of the Gospels which will enable the student both to understand the reasons for the conclusions of the critics and provide him with the qualifications to criticise them.

## Appendix II

*The Parousia and the Eschatological Jesus*

THE *Parousia*, or return to earth of Jesus Christ in glory with divine power to judge mankind and terminate the drama of human history on this planet, has constituted an article of the Christian creed from early Apostolic times. It was certainly the belief of St. Paul and of his converts in the many churches which he founded from as early as 50 A.D. This is proved by his epistles to the *Thessalonians* with their vivid account of Christ's descent from heaven heralded by the trumpet note of the archangel, when the dead in Christ will arise from their graves, and faithful Christians still living on the earth will be caught up to meet Christ in the air, to be henceforth for ever with the Lord. "Wherefore comfort ye one another with these words." (i *Thess.* iv; 18). There is no doubt that the whole Christian Church, Jewish and Gentile, did so. The Christian watchword which goes back to the Aramaic-speaking period of the Primitive Church was *Maranatha*, "Our Lord comes"—we have it not only in the New Testament, but also in the *Didache*. The *Book of the Revelation* closes with the inspiring promise: "Behold I come quickly," and the faithful and expectant church responds, "Even so come, Lord Jesus."

However, in the *Second Epistle of St. Peter*—the latest written of our New Testament books—there is evidence that the Advent hope was weakening. Christians were asking: "Where is the promise of His Coming?" (ii *Peter* iii; 4). The writer of the

Epistle answers stoutly: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as men count slackness," but the divine way of reckoning time differs from the human as the Psalmist indicates: "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day."

By the year 200 A.D. Tertullian states that Christians had ceased to pray for the hastening of the Second Advent and were petitioning that it might be postponed. There is no need to follow the vicissitudes which the Advent Hope has experienced in Christian history. The real question for students of the Christian religion is: How did the Apocalyptic form of the Advent Hope originate? What is the authority for it?

The unanimous Christian answer down to the nineteenth century was that it originated with Jesus Himself—although perhaps there were some in the Apostolic Age who would have answered otherwise. St. Luke in *Acts* i does not attribute the prediction of the Second Advent to Jesus Himself but to the angelic messengers who addressed the apostles after the Ascension: "Ye men of Galilee why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." (*Acts* i; 11.) The author of the Fourth Gospel transforms the Advent Hope by promising the Return of Jesus as the Paraclete or Comforter in the hearts of believers—not a visible apocalyptic advent. But with few exceptions the Apocalyptic Second Advent of Jesus as we have it expressed in our collect for the first Sunday in Advent, in the great Advent

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hymns of Thomas of Celano and Martin Luther, in Michael Angelo's magnificent Judgment scene in the Sistine Chapel, constituted the universal expectation of the Christian Church until the days of Frederick Denison Maurice. A contemporary of Maurice, T. H. Huxley, wrote of the Apocalyptic Advent Hope:

"If Jesus believed and taught that, then assuredly he was under an illusion, and he is responsible for that which the mere effluxion of time has demonstrated to be a prodigious error."

(cited by Dr. Glasson)

The dilemma thus created was relieved by F. D. Maurice and his followers who spiritualised the Advent Hope. They (inspired by the teaching of St. John) taught that there were many comings of Christ and many last hours in Christian experience. Christian crises, whether personal or social or political were comings of Christ by which the Advent Hope was progressively realised in the Christian history of mankind. This interpretation of the realisation of the Advent Hope identified it with the coming of the Kingdom of God in human society. This has been called the "liberal view" of the Second Advent, and it was generally accepted by liberal-minded Christians of the reformed churches in the second half of the nineteenth century and was regarded as expressing the essential meaning of Jesus Himself. It was pointed out by F. D. Maurice that the declaration addressed by Jesus to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin at His trial affirmed the progressive advent of Jesus beginning at that very moment. Henceforth (ἀπ' ἄρτι) ye shall see the Son of Man

sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven. (*Mt.* xxvi; 64.) From henceforth (ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν) shall the Son of Man be seated at the right hand of the power of God. (*Lk.* xxii; 69.)

The appearance, however, of Schweitzer's *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, particularly in its English translation in 1911 recreated the old dilemma. By its forcible and eloquent argument that Jesus Himself held and taught His imminent Return in glory as being the very heart of His Messianic Gospel, Schweitzer's book had an amazing success both on the Continent and in England; and orthodox Christians, heretical Christians, agnostics and secularists, accepted it as the last word on this issue. All agreed that Jesus had ardently believed in His Second Advent. He had dramatically affirmed it and He had been mistaken. In the case of Schweitzer whose Christian faith was entirely undogmatic, and its saving power only realisable through Christian conduct and character, his conclusion had no effect at all.

The doctrine of the *kenosis* which Gore and others had enunciated in *Lux Mundi*, by stressing that the Incarnation necessitated a human limitation in the knowledge of Jesus constituted for many educated English Churchmen an apologetic bulwark against the Schweitzerian conclusion. But for many plain people Schweitzer's conclusions had a devastating effect on their Christian Faith.

Once again the tide began to turn. Professor Sanday, who had at the outset welcomed Schweitzer's conclusions, three years later made a statement that that welcome had been premature. B. H. Streeter, who carried on so influentially Sanday's methods and

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spirit in the critical study of the Gospels in Oxford, contributed a weighty appendix entitled "Synoptic Criticism and the Eschatological Problem" to *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, published in 1911 and edited by Sanday. The crucial conclusions of the Appendix are thus summarised by Streeter himself:

"Three clearly marked stages in the development of the Eschatological Teaching ascribed to our Lord are found respectively in *Q*, *Mark*, and *Matthew*.

In *Q* the emphasis is rather on the conception of the Kingdom, as already present and to be extended by a process of gradual growth. Sayings implying that its appearance is future and catastrophic also occur, but they are not elaborated into any detail.

In *Mark*—especially in chapter xiii—the emphasis is on the future catastrophic conception, which is worked out with much detail of the conventional Apocalyptic type.

In *Matthew* the detail is still further elaborated, and both by what he adds and what he omits, the catastrophic conception is enhanced.

The same tendency was no doubt in operation before even *Q* was written down, but some residuum of Apocalyptic eschatology in the authentic teaching of Christ is required to explain the beliefs of the early Church." (p. 425.)

In his *Four Gospels, a Study of Origins*, published in 1924, there is no indication that Streeter has retreated from these conclusions. We may add here that Harnack divided *Q* into 56 sections, of which only



three are eschatological. We know that the preaching of John the Baptist was strongly eschatological and it is possible that these eschatological sections in *Q* may have been derived from him or have been modified by the influence of John's disciples who became apostles of Jesus.

The rise of "Form-Criticism" of the Gospels in Germany in the concluding years of the First World War has indirectly strengthened the Liberal interpretation of the *Parousia* as against the Eschatological or Apocalyptic interpretation of it. The effect of Form Criticism of the Gospels has been to give the impression that the Synoptic Gospels are far less historical than Source Criticism demonstrated them to be, and that we can feel very little security that many of the sayings attributed to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels are really His. Although the stress laid by the Form-Critics on the influence of oral and local ecclesiastical tradition on the Gospel records has not been without value, their more extreme conclusions are steadily losing ground, especially those which discredit the reliability of the Marcan *historical order* and reject many of the *Q* Sayings as not being actual utterances of Jesus.

Professor C. H. Dodd, by classifying the eschatological element in the Synoptic Gospels as "realised eschatology" and "futurist eschatology," the former of which he attributes to Jesus and the latter as a contribution derived from contemporary Judaism, has helped to clarify the situation. The "realised eschatology" of Jesus declared that all which Old Testament prophets, psalmists, seers had predicted about the last days was now being fulfilled by His

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own Mission and Gospel. On the other hand, the "futurist eschatology" in the Gospels was not proclaimed by Jesus but is merely the reflection of Jewish apocalyptic speculations and Primitive Christian expectations.

The latest contribution to the eschatological controversy is contributed in *The Second Advent* by Dr. T. F. Glasson, published in 1946. Dr. Glasson's conclusions may be summarised thus: that the eschatological outlook of Jesus was restricted to the future advance of the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. He did not conceive of the advance as secured by apocalyptic irruptions but by the prayers, faith, loyalty, heroism of those who received with joy His Gospel of the Kingdom of God and strove to realise it in their own lives and in those of others. He looked forward to the triumph of the Kingdom but insisted that the triumph would cost much—the Cross must precede the Crown. The only precise prediction of Jesus about the future foretold the destruction of the Temple (as did Micah and Jeremiah before Him). This destruction of the Temple no doubt included the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of Judaism. Although Jesus predicted the triumph of the Kingdom of God among mankind it is not clear, that except on the night of His condemnation to death, He included His own triumph in that forecast. His return again to earth as the Divine Judge of mankind, Dr. Glasson regards as a misinterpretation of *Mt.* xxvi; 64 and *Lk.* xxii; 69. He regards the Apocalyptic Return of Jesus as Judge as having originated in the primitive Christian community. This Second Advent faith

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possessed great apologetic value in asserting and confirming the Messiahship of Jesus against the attacks and jibes of the Jews; that a crucified impostor could not possibly be what His deluded followers claimed He was. In the Old Testament Scriptures and in the later apocalyptic literature Primitive Christians collected oracles predicting the day of the Lord and of a coming divine judgment on Israel and on the nations. They interpreted these oracles as predicting the Return of Jesus as the triumphant Judge of mankind and used them to comfort themselves and to confute and confound those who jeered at their delusion. The Second Advent of Jesus in the near future they were assured would justify their faith and strike terror into the hearts of their opponents.

“Every eye shall now behold Him  
Robed in dreadful majesty;  
Those who set at nought and sold Him,  
Pierced and Nailed Him to the Tree;  
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing,  
Shall the true Messiah see.”

It would seem that as Judaism had been mistaken in the form in which it had expected the Messiah to come as its Deliverer so the Christian Church from primitive times has also been mistaken in its conception of the mode of the *Parousia* of Jesus.

The essential Christian Faith in the *Parousia* of Jesus is enshrined in the concluding words of the First Gospel:

“Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world.”

In this essential faith Liberals and Eschatologists are united.

## Appendix III

*St. Peter and the Keys of the Kingdom*

(Mt. xvi; 17-19)

ALTHOUGH *Matthew* xvi; 17-19 has exercised immense influence in the History of the Christian Church and the whole conception of the nature and authority of the Kingdom of God on earth, I have not referred to it in my lectures. The passage is, of course, extremely controversial and can hardly be dealt with summarily. The opening words of the passage, "Thou art Peter and on this rock I will build my Church" are inscribed in Latin on the inside of the dome of St. Peter's in Rome, and most appropriately, for this is claimed to be the Scriptural justification of the Papacy.

The second part of the passage which opens with the words: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" is no less famous as a bulwark of Papal claims. Its citation at a critical moment compelled the surrender of Northumbrian Christianity to Papal Supremacy in this country.

Milton's majestic portrait in *Lycidas* of "The Pilot of the Galilean Lake" is inspired by it.

"Two massive keys he bore of metals twain  
The golden opes, the iron shuts amain."

*Matthew* alone records these promises of Jesus to St. Peter. They are not contained in the parallel accounts in *Mark* and *Luke* which record St. Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ at Cæsarea Philippi. Yet, if *Matthew's* declaration was actually uttered by

Jesus to Peter it is very difficult to account for its absence from *Mark* (the Petrine and Roman Gospel) as well as its absence from *Luke*. The word church (*ekklesia*) which occurs in the declaration lays it open to suspicion. The word *ekklesia* does not occur anywhere in the other three Gospels and in *Matthew* only here, and in xviii; 17, which is plainly not an utterance of Jesus Himself since it directs that an offender who refuses to obey the Church shall be treated as a Pagan and a Publican. The friend of publicans and sinners we may feel sure gave no such command. It is a regulation authorised by the Primitive Church.

The promise that Jesus will build His Church on Peter and that He will give him the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to a later period than the human ministry of Jesus. St. Matthew's Gospel was the Gospel of the Church of Antioch before it became one of the four Canonical Gospels of the Universal Church and it reflects the high honour in which Peter was held in the great Church of Antioch, of which he was the founder.

Matthew alone records other unique events in St. Peter's association with his Master which are intended to exalt him in the estimation of the faithful. For example: his walking on the water, and also his catching at the command of Jesus the fish with the tribute money in its mouth. These narratives belong to the source which are designated *M* by the critics, and are of doubtful historicity.

It is historically incredible that Jesus could have conferred on Peter alone the supreme authority which the Papal Church has claimed on the basis of

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this dictum. If Jesus did confer such authority on St. Peter, how could St. Paul dare to withstand St. Peter to the face in Antioch? (*Gal.* ii; 11.) And how are we to account for St. James and not St. Peter presiding at the Council of Jerusalem?

Moreover, in *John* xx; 22, 23, it is to the whole apostolic body and not to St. Peter alone that the Risen Jesus commits authority to bind and loose:

“He breathed on them and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained.”

It is to be noted that the Apocalyptic Seer saw inscribed in the foundations of the New Jerusalem, not the name of St. Peter alone, but the names of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb. It is clear that the unique primacy assigned to Peter by *Mt.* xvi; 17-19 was unknown to the Primitive Christian Church and certainly formed no part of its faith.

A clear and judicious investigation and exposition of *Mt.* xvi, 17-19 by Professor T. W. Manson is contained in the *Mission and Message of Jesus* by Major, Manson and Wright (pp. 493-497).

Dr. Manson maintains there that the correct meaning of the “Thou art Peter” declaration is that the Christian Church is to be founded on Peter, not on the Messiahship of Jesus confessed by Peter, but on Peter himself the *kepha* (Aramaic, rock). If this be so it contradicts St. Paul’s statements that Jesus Christ is the rock (i *Cor.* x; 3) and that

“Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (i *Cor.* iii; 11.)

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Dr. Manson regards this passage as having originated in Jewish Christian circles interested in exalting the apostolic authority of St. Peter especially over that of St. Paul. Of the "keys-passage," Dr. Manson writes :

"The whole verse seems to belong to the post-resurrection period."

He interprets the passage as asserting that

"Peter is to be God's vicegerent in all the affairs of the Kingdom on earth. This means that he is the ruler of the Church."

Dr. Manson adds that

"The grant of exclusive power to Peter is inconsistent with *Mt.* xviii; 18, where the same powers are given to the whole body of disciples." (p. 497.)



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